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THE SELF IS NOT REALIZED BY THE WEAK

“ नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः ॥ ”

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THE
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PRAYER

Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme Being.

Thou art the great refuge of the Universe. Thou art the Supreme Goal. By Thee the universe is pervaded.

Salutations to Thee before and to Thee behind. Infinite in power and prowess, Thou pervadest all.

Thou art the Father of the Universe, greater than the greatest. Thou art the One Object of Worship.

I prostrate myself before Thee in adoration and crave Thy forgiveness. Forgive me, O Lord, as a father forgives his child, a friend his friend, a lover his beloved.

Salutations to Thee—the Existence Absolute—the Support of the worlds.

Salutations to Thee, the one Reality without a second, the giver of salvation.

Salutations to Thee—the Intelligence Absolute—who dost appear as everything.

Salutations to Thee, the Self of the self—All-Pervading—the Absolute Being.

On Thee, the One alone, do we meditate. To Thee, the One alone, the witness of the universe, do we render our salutations. In Thee, the One alone, who is the support of all, the self-existent Lord, the vessel of safety in the ocean of life, do we seek refuge.

Desirous of salvation I seek refuge in Thee, the Effulgent Being, whose light reveals the glory of the Self, the Divine in us who is absolutely pure and immortal by nature, who is the way to perfect purity and immortality for us.

From the unreal lead me to the Real.

From darkness lead me to Light.

From death lead me to Immortality.

Scripture.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY ?

By Satishchandra Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D.

Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University

THE word 'philosophy' literally means love of wisdom and knowledge. But this at once raises the question: Wisdom and knowledge of what? Is it wisdom of the world and knowledge of worldly things that we are to mean by philosophy? If it were so, a man of worldly wisdom would be a better philosopher than an academic one. Or, if philosophy meant a systematic knowledge of the physical world, science will have a better claim to recognition as philosophy than pure philosophy itself. It is science that affords a more accurate and reliable knowledge of physical things and events than philosophy. Philosophy has to depend on the sciences for a knowledge of the physical world. If, therefore, philosophy means nothing more than wisdom and knowledge of the physical world, we may as well do without it and install science in its place. In view of this it would appear rather strange that among philosophers themselves many have taken philosophy to mean worldly wisdom in some form or other. The result is that men have begun to doubt the necessity of philosophy as a study distinct from science.

In the West we find four main conceptions of philosophy. Of these the first is that philosophy is 'the synthesis of the sciences'. It is the universal science which interprets and unites the results of the special sciences into a consistent system. Each of the special sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, studies a particular department

of the physical world and gives us certain truths regarding its own subject matter. But these truths are limited to particular portions of the world and do not apply to the world as a whole. Further, the truths and generalizations of the different sciences are sometimes found to conflict with, and even contradict, one another. Philosophy as a universal science combines the results of the special sciences, reconciles their contradictions, and gives us a general view of the world as a whole. 'Science', says Herbert Spencer, 'is partially unified knowledge, philosophy completely unified knowledge; the generalizations of philosophy comprehend and consolidate the widest generalizations of science; philosophy is knowledge of the highest degree of generality.' The function of philosophy is, therefore, to harmonize the results of all the sciences into a consistent world-view.

But the conception of philosophy as 'the synthesis of the sciences' or a 'universal science' suffers from many defects. A synthesis of all the sciences—past, present, and future—is an impossible task for any human being. Even if it is possible for a man to acquaint himself with the entire body of present scientific knowledge, it does not lie in him to know the sciences that are yet to be formulated by posterity. The truths of science and the laws of nature discovered by scientists are subject to change and modification from time to time. So long as no finality is reached by the sciences, there cannot

be a philosophy in the sense of a completely unified knowledge of the world as a whole. Or, if philosophy is to change and grow with the advance of science, it cannot claim to give us the truth about the whole world. What is true of the world as a whole must always remain true and cannot turn out to be false at a future period of the world's history. In fact, philosophy as 'a growing science' would be but science and not philosophy proper. Further, a view of the world as a whole cannot be attained by merely putting together the results of all the sciences. Such a view will be only an aggregate of all the scientific truths relating to different departments of the world, and not a single truth which is universal and applicable to the whole world. The transition from the many conflicting views of the sciences to one harmonious world-view cannot be explained by science. A view of the world as a whole is not attained by the scientific method of observation and experiment, but by some sort of imaginative or intuitive insight. A total, synoptic view of the universe may be due to a flight of the imagination or a mystic vision, but not to rigorous scientific experimentation. Nor can the world-view be theoretically proved or demonstrated like other scientific truths. Whatever character of the world as a whole we may accept in our world-view, it cannot be scientifically proved unless we have explored all the regions of the infinite universe. Thus the conception of philosophy as a 'synthesis of the sciences' or 'a super science' is found to be indefensible.

Another conception of philosophy which we find in the West is that it

is the 'logical study of the foundations of the sciences'. All the special sciences are founded on certain basic concepts which are not thoroughly examined by them, but are more or less assumed as true. The sciences cannot proceed with the investigation of nature unless they accept the truth of these fundamental concepts. These are the concepts of space, time, causality, substance, identity, etc. It is philosophy that critically examines these fundamental concepts of science by the method of logical analysis. Thus some American neo-realists tell us: 'Philosophy is distinguished from the sciences by the breadth of its generalization, the refinement of its criticism, and the ultimate character of its special problems.'¹ Among British neo-realists Mr. Bertrand Russell also holds the same view when he observes: 'Philosophical knowledge does not differ essentially from scientific knowledge; and the results obtained by philosophy are not radically different from those obtained from science. The essential characteristic of philosophy, which makes it a study distinct from science, is *criticism*. It examines critically the principles employed in science.'²

The late Professor Samuel Alexander, another renowned British neo-realist, accepts almost the same view of philosophy, although with an element of ambiguity in it. By philosophy, he means *metaphysics*, and yet holds that it differs from the special sciences, not so much in its method as in the nature of the subjects with which it deals. According to him, philosophy is an attempt to

¹ See *The New Realism*, p. 42.

² *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 233.

study such very comprehensive topics as the ultimate nature of existence, if it has any, and the ultimate categories of experience like space, time, and causality, substance and quantity, the individual and the universal. The method of philosophy is, like that of the sciences, empirical. It will proceed like them by reflective description and analysis of its special subject-matter and bring its data into verifiable connection. The subject-matter of philosophy is, in a special sense, non-empirical, while that of the sciences is empirical. But the non-empirical means for him the pervasive characters of experienced things like their spatial and temporal characters, and the empirical means their variable characters like colour, taste, and smell. This therefore means that philosophy is an empirical study of the pervasive characters of the empirical world, while science is a similar study of the variable characters of the same world.³

The second conception of philosophy as a logical study of the ultimate concepts of science is somewhat corrective of the first one. It gives up the hopeless attempt to synthesize all the sciences into an absolutely coherent system. Still, it is no more acceptable to us than the first. It makes a confusion between science and philosophy. If philosophy be but a logical analysis of scientific knowledge, we do not see how a real distinction between the two can be maintained. Science is a study of empirical facts, and it makes as much use of the method of logical analysis as any other study. If it can thus study the facts of experience and

formulate their less general laws and concepts, there is no reason why it should not be allowed to formulate the most comprehensive and fundamental ones, provided they are genuinely scientific. Or, if we require a philosophy to study the ultimate concepts of science, why not allow the same philosophy to study and discover its less ultimate laws and concepts, and dispense with science altogether? As a matter of fact, however, science formulates not only the particular laws and concepts of our experience of the physical world, but also its most general and universal laws and concepts. Philosophy has to depend on science itself for a correct analysis and formulation of both the special and general laws and concepts of the physical world. As the neo-realists themselves contend, many of the laws of pure reason and the forms of thought, which Kant is supposed to have deduced *a priori* from the nature of thought, are derived from his knowledge of physics and mathematics. They maintain also that the task of philosophy is not *radically* different from that of the special sciences, and that the difference between them is a difference of degree and not of kind, a difference like that between experimental and theoretical physics. If all this be true, we do not understand why we should require any philosophy to do the task of science over again. Rather we should remain content with science and have our knowledge of the fundamental concepts of space, time, causality, etc., from science itself in its capacity as a theoretical study.

Professor Alexander's conception of philosophy tries to combine two incompatible concepts of it. By phi-

³ See Alexander, *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. I, Introduction.

losophy he means metaphysics and yet maintains that it is one of the sciences, delimited from the others by its special subject-matter. For him, philosophy is the study of 'the *ultimate nature of existence* or of *being as such*', and of the ultimate categories of experience like space, time, causality, etc. But while there may be a scientific study of both the facts and ultimate categories of experience, there can hardly be such a study of being as such, of which we can have no sense-experience. Sense-experience is of particular, determinate things. Being as such or pure being is indeterminate and, therefore, not amenable to sense-experience and scientific study. Philosophy as metaphysics may be the study of pure being, but then it will not be a science in the strict sense. Hence it is rather a confusion of thought to define philosophy as metaphysics of pure being and identify it with science.

Kant's conception of philosophy as 'the metaphysic of experience' is closely allied to the preceding concept. He thinks that philosophy should give up the futile attempt to know ultimate realities like God and the self, and limit itself to the world of experience. But our experience of the world is conditioned by our sense and understanding. What is therefore involved in the nature of our sensibility and understanding must govern all knowledge of the world. Philosophy is the logical analysis of the universal forms of sense-intuition and categories of the understanding. In so far as philosophy discovers the universal conditions of human experience it gives us certain and *a priori* knowledge of the world of experience. But this knowledge cannot touch reality as it is in itself. It tells us

how reality appears through our sense and understanding. Hence philosophy cannot give us any knowledge about transcendent realities like God and self, freedom and immortality. We may be under the necessity of *thinking* about these realities, but we have no means of *knowing* them. These are only ideas of reason or ideals of thought which we may entertain by way of moral faith, but cannot justify with the help of theoretical reason.

Although Kant's philosophy is almost unparalleled in history as a type of critical thinking, yet it seems to make a confusion between philosophy and science. If philosophy is only the criticism of sense-experience to find out its universal and necessary conditions, we do not see how it can be distinguished from science. What Kant actually did in his *Critique of Pure Reason* was just a deduction of the fundamental concepts of science from the *a priori* principles of synthetic knowledge. But a discovery of the ultimate concepts of science is the work of science itself or of a logic of the sciences. We do not require a separate study like philosophy to tell us what the ultimate concepts of scientific knowledge are. So for Kant philosophy would be at its best a transcendental logic of the sciences.

Another conception of philosophy which is entirely new and revolutionary has been formulated in the West by the Logical Positivists.⁴ According to them, philosophy is neither a metaphysic of experience in the Kantian sense nor a metaphysic of reality beyond sense-experience. It is not concerned with the discovery

⁴ For an account of Logical Positivism see Mr. A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*.

of the speculative truths and ultimate concepts of science. Nor is it concerned with the knowledge of transcendent realities like God and the self. Metaphysical propositions about transcendent realities are not verifiable in sense-experience and are, therefore, nonsensical. The proper function of philosophy is the logical analysis of the propositions of science. It defines the symbols or words which occur in the propositions of science and exhibits the logical relationships of such propositions. Given certain scientific propositions, it would show how these can be translated into other propositions which can be verified or are in principle verifiable in sense-experience. Philosophy is therefore a criticism of scientific propositions to determine their interrelation and significance in terms of sense-experience. Some logical positivists go further and maintain that philosophy is the analysis of sentences and words, scientific or otherwise, in order to disclose their meaning and significance. If they have any use, i.e., if they describe a situation, they have meaning; if not, they are meaningless. In the light of this, the so-called sentences of metaphysics and of ethics are said to be meaningless or pseudo-sentences. Thus Wittgenstein holds that philosophy is the 'critique of language', its business is 'the logical clarification of ideas', of the sentences and concepts of sciences, i.e., the logic of science.⁵

We need not here enter on a detailed examination of logical positivism. But we must observe that the logical positivist's idea of philosophy is open to two grave objections. If philoso-

phy is but the analysis or critique of language, what would be the distinction between grammar or the science of language and philosophy? It may be true that ordinary grammar is not sufficiently critical and does not thoroughly examine all the aspects and implications of human language. But that only shows that we require a better grammar which should be more critical, and not that we require a philosophy to perform the function of grammar. If philosophy be the logical analysis of the concepts and propositions of science, we can very well entrust logic with this task and dispense with philosophy altogether. Or, we may say that science itself in its logical aspect may analyse its concepts and explicate the logical relationship of its propositions. If this be so, we need not go beyond science and formulate a duplicate logic of science in philosophy. This means that we require no philosophy as a distinct study. Mr. M. Schlick, the leader of the positivists, was therefore more consistent when he predicted a future era in which there would be no philosophy but only philosophicalness.⁶ But the conclusion to be drawn from this is not that there should be no philosophy, but that philosophy should not be identified with the science of language or the logic of science. If philosophy is to be anything distinct from science or the logic of science, it must be a metaphysics of reality beyond sensuous phenomena. What prevents the logical positivists and also Kant from accepting this conception of philosophy is their preconception that all human experience is sensuous

⁵ See G. N. Mathrani, *Wittgensteinian Philosophy*, p. 3-4.

⁶ See *The Journal of Philosophy*, July 16, 1936, p. 408.

and that there is no non-sensuous experience. But that there is such a thing as non-sensuous experience becomes clear when we consider our moral, aesthetic, and religious experiences. These are anything but sense-experiences of physical facts. Hence we have to admit that there is a super-sensuous reality which is given to us through some kind of non-sensuous or spiritual experience. If this is so, then philosophy can be a metaphysics of reality and yet not nonsensical. The truths of metaphysics may be verified by non-sensuous experience, even if we deny the possibility of their verification in sense-experience.

The conception of philosophy as the metaphysics of reality was formulated in the West as early as Plato and Aristotle. For Plato philosophy is the 'knowledge of reality, of being as such, of that which is'. It is the knowledge of 'the universal, unchangeable, and eternal'. Such knowledge cannot be given by sense-perception which does not reveal the reality of things, but gives mere appearance. It is to be attained through reason. So also Aristotle takes philosophy to mean metaphysics as the science of being as such or of pure being. While the special sciences deal with certain parts or phases of being, it is philosophy which is concerned with being as such or being as it is in itself. Hence philosophy must be different from any of the special sciences. Among modern Western idealists Hegel clearly restates the same old conception of philosophy when he defines it as 'the science of absolute idea'. 'Philosophy', says Hegel, 'is not a wisdom of the world, but is knowledge of what is not of the world; it

is not knowledge which concerns external mass or empirical existence and life but is knowledge of that which is eternal, of what God is, and what flows out of His nature.'⁷ Mr. F. H. Bradley, a British Neo-Hegelian, has fully explicated this conception of philosophy in his *Appearance and Reality*. He defines philosophy or metaphysics as 'an attempt to know reality as against mere appearance'.⁸ The objects of our ordinary experience are not real, rather they are the appearances of reality in relation to other thought. A critical examination of the categories or concepts which enter into our knowledge of the world shows how they all involve serious inconsistencies and contradictions. As such they cannot give us reality which must be free from contradiction. The real cannot be self-contradictory. All objects of thought and ordinary experience being self-contradictory are but appearances. Philosophy is the attempt to know the reality underlying this appearance of a world of objects.

Of the four main concepts of philosophy which we find in the West, it is the last one, mentioned above, that closely resembles the Indian conception of it. For the ancient Indian thinkers philosophy is the knowledge of reality underlying the phenomenal world (*tattvajnana*). But this knowledge is not merely an intellectual understanding of the truth, nor a matter of blind faith and unsteady belief. It is the direct knowledge or clear realization of the truth. For almost all the Indian

⁷ See Hegel, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 19.

⁸ See Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 1.

thinkers, philosophy is the direct experience or vision of absolute truth (*darsana*). According to them, the visible world of space and time, of matter and motion, is not ultimately real. Beyond the physical world there is a transcendent world of reality, an invisible and eternal spiritual order. The spiritual order of reality is the ground of the existence and order of the physical world. We live and act in this visible physical universe in order to realize our moral destiny as immortal selves under the guidance of the universal moral law of karma. The physical world is therefore a moral stage for the education and emancipation of individual selves. The physical universe is a manifestation of spiritual reality. It is the appearance of the transcendent world of self or selves under the conditions of time, space, causality, etc. We know the physical world through our senses and reason. But for a knowledge of the real world of spirit, we have to control our senses and bring our desires and passions under the rule of reason. The reason in us is indeed of great help in removing false notions and beliefs regarding the self within and the world outside. But it cannot by itself lead to the direct experience of the self or the spiritual reality. What is absolutely necessary to attain this experience is purification of the mind and constant contemplation of the Self. When we have the direct experience of spiritual reality through moral purification and devout meditation, the critical faculty of reasoning in us must function to justify the truths given by that experience and defend them against sceptical attacks. Thus from the standpoint of ancient Indian thought, philosophy is the direct

knowledge of reality as distinguished from appearances. This knowledge is to be attained through purification of the mind and contemplation of the self (yoga). And it must finally be explicated and justified by the help of the reason in us.

It will be observed here that while the ancient Indian thinkers agree with Western idealists like Hegel and Bradley in holding that philosophy is the knowledge of reality as against appearance, they differ from the latter on one important point. According to them, philosophic knowledge as the direct experience of reality is to be attained through contemplation and justified by the reason. For Hegel, however, knowledge of the absolute is given by the speculative reason which he distinguishes from the theoretical reason called the understanding. While the understanding is analytic and has a tendency to break up the unity of the absolute, the speculative reason is the 'reason of the universal which presses forward to unity.' The former denies the reality of the absolute, the latter affirms it. But what the speculative reason of Hegel does, or possibly can, give us is a speculative conception and not a direct experience of the absolute. Reason is not a *way of knowing* facts, but a method of rationalizing or systematizing our knowledge of facts. It is experience alone that can give us knowledge of facts or realities. Reason, even at its best, can give us a notion or conception of a thing, but not any acquaintance with it. Hence on Hegel's view of the matter, philosophy would give us only an idea and not any experience of the absolute. Bradley seems to have a better insight than Hegel when he

tries to derive our knowledge of the absolute, not from reason, but from the experiences involved in mere feeling or immediate presentation, and in the ideas of goodness and of the beautiful. The absolute is for him a unity which embraces and yet transcends the manifold appearances or objects of the world. Such a unity we find in mere feeling and also in our moral and aesthetic consciousness. In these experiences we seem to have the knowledge of a unity which, like the absolute, transcends and yet contains every manifold appearance. Mere feeling is a unity which contains and yet overcomes the distinction between the subject who feels his feeling, and the felt object. So also in our moral and aesthetic experiences we have a unity which includes and yet transcends the distinctions of subject, object, and their relation. But Bradley has frankly confessed that even these 'supply not an *experience* but an abstract idea of the absolute, and that if we can realize at all the general features of the absolute and see that somehow they come together in a way known vaguely and in the abstract, our result is certain.'⁹ Thus Bradley seems to admit that certain knowledge of the absolute requires a realization of it in some direct experience. But he has not suggested any method of attaining this much-needed experience. It is here that Indian philosophy recommends moral purification and constant contemplation as the only way of having a direct experience or realization of the absolute.

From the foregoing discussion it would appear that there are two

broad concepts of philosophy which have so far been formulated in the history of philosophy. First we have the general view that philosophy is a science of some kind and that it differs from the special sciences not in kind but in degree. It deals with the same world as the special sciences do. But while the latter deal with particular parts and special problems of the physical world, philosophy is concerned with its most general problems and examines them more critically than any of the special sciences. This is what we may call the scientific concept of philosophy, and under it we may bring all such conceptions of philosophy as 'the synthesis of the sciences', 'the study of the fundamental concepts of science', 'the logic of science', or 'the metaphysic of experience'. Under it comes also Mr. R. G. Collingwood's idea of metaphysics as an historical science of the absolute presuppositions of scientific thought at any period of its history.¹⁰ We have discussed above these different concepts of philosophy and tried to show how, on the basis of any of them, it is difficult to maintain the distinction between science and philosophy. Rather, we are constrained to hold that to make a science of philosophy, in any legitimate sense of the word science, is to make an end of philosophy. If philosophy be really a science it cannot, consistently with its scientific basis, give us knowledge about any but this physical world. When therefore some modern scientists like James Jeans and Max Planck talk of pure thought or universal consciousness as the

⁹ See Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 140-142.

¹⁰ See Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics*, p. 47.

background of this visible universe, we suspect that they transgress the limits of strict science and give us the messages of their intuitive or religious experience. Observation and experiment, on which science is based, give us no ground for the belief in any universal spiritual background of the physical world. To say that philosophy is not a science but a logic of science is not to improve matters much. For a logic of science is really science itself in its abstract and theoretical aspect. A science like physics or mathematics can and does formulate and examine critically its fundamental concepts, provided they are genuinely scientific. If, however, among the basic concepts or presuppositions of science we introduce theological or metaphysical ideas, it is doubtful whether any logic of science is competent to deal with them. When, for example, God is said to be the presupposition of natural science in any age, it is no logic of science that discovers the presupposition. Rather, it is man's religious experience that is the basis of his idea of God. Hence it seems that so far as our knowledge of the physical world is concerned it is science that should give us its fundamental concepts and presuppositions and that we require no philosophy to discover or justify them.

The second broad concept of philosophy is that it is metaphysics or the study of reality as distinguished from appearances. Under this head come the conceptions of philosophy as formulated by the Western idealists and the ancient Indian thinkers. The distinction between reality and appearance is fundamental to this concept of philosophy. This distinction is forced on us when we reflect

on the objects of our ordinary experience. These objects possess certain spatial and temporal characters, and sense-qualities like colour, sound, touch, taste, and smell. All the characters and qualities of objects are variable and relative to the condition of the perceiver. The same thing appears to have different shapes, sizes, colours, etc. for different perceivers looking at it from different positions. Even the same person perceives different qualities—colours, tastes, etc.—in the same thing under different conditions. So the questions arise: What is the real character of a thing? What is the reality of the thing as distinguished from its appearances to our senses? Philosophy is the attempt to know the reality underlying the objects of sense-experience. It is true that for our sense organs the objects possess a sensuous existence as things with certain sensible qualities. But it is equally true that when out of relation to our sense and mind they have not this kind of sensuous existence. What then is the non-sensuous being or existence that appears as this visible world of objects? Reality is the non-sensuous being underlying sensuous objects. How should we know reality? It cannot be known by our senses and reason. What comes through our senses is bound to be modified by the nature of our sensibility, just as all things appear blue when seen through a pair of blue spectacles. Colour, sound, taste, and smell are the forms of reaction of our senses to vibrations and chemical actions of physical forces which have in them no colour, sound, etc. Hence the objects of sense-perception must be physical things with sensuous

qualities. Nor can reason give us any experience of super-sensuous reality. All that we can have by means of the reason is an abstract idea or concept of the reality beyond sensuous phenomena. It cannot give a direct experience of reality, for it is not an organ of knowledge like the senses. Reason is not a way of experiencing anything, sensuous or non-sensuous, but a way of rationalizing our experiences of things. Hence we must seek for some other way of knowing reality. Reality being the non-sensuous being underlying sensuous phenomena we must have a non-sensuous experience of it. All of us are in one way or other in touch with the non-sensuous reality beyond the sensuous world. Some may apprehend reality through intuition, some through religious feeling or through mystical experience. These are perhaps different ways of describing the same fact, namely, an experience in which consciousness and being become identical. In this experience the variations of sense-experience and the fluctuations of thought die out and we have a pure consciousness which merely is and is thus identical with reality or being as such. One way of attaining this experience, as recommended in Indian philosophy, is yoga or concentration in which there is the cessation of all mental activities. Philosophy as a metaphysic of reality is based on this direct experience of reality, which has been variously described as mystical, intuitive, spiritual, or religious experience. But while

philosophy is based on this experience, it consists properly in the attempt to rationalize the experience or experiences of super-sensuous reality. Philosophy is not merely the intuitive experience of reality. If it were so, it would be indistinguishable from mysticism. But philosophy is not mysticism, although it may have its basis in the mystical experience. It is an intellectual effort to interpret and understand the universe in the light of our intuitive or mystical experience of reality. Although men as spiritual beings may, in one way or other, be in communion with the super-sensuous reality, yet they are not, strictly speaking, all philosophers or metaphysicians. Philosophers are men who have the experience of the super-sensuous and make an intellectual attempt to rationalize it so as to enable us to understand the world of ordinary experience and solve the ultimate problems of our life. Philosophy is thus the rationalization of our experiences of super-sensuous reality or the intellectual effort to understand the world in the light of those experiences. To rationalize our experiences of reality is, however, not to prove them by the help of sense-experience or scientific knowledge. Rather it is to justify them by a criticism of the knowledge given by the senses and the sciences to show its inadequacy. Philosophy may therefore be defined also as the criticism of sense-experience and scientific knowledge to justify our knowledge of super-sensuous reality.

DISTRACTIONS

By Aldous Huxley

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THE petition, 'Thy Kingdom come,' has a necessary and unavoidable corollary, which is, 'Our kingdom go.' The condition of complete illumination is complete purgation. Only the purified soul can realize identity with Brahman: or, to change the religious vocabulary, union with God can never be achieved by the Old Adam, who must lose the life of self-will in order to gain the life of the divine will. These principles have been accepted as fundamental and axiomatic by all mystics, of whatever country, faith and period.

When these principles are applied in practice, it is found that the personal kingdom which has to go, if the divine kingdom is to come, consists mainly of two great provinces, Passions and Distractions. Of the passions it is unnecessary to say much here, for the good reason that so much has been said elsewhere. Furthermore, it is, or should be, self-evident that 'Thy kingdom' cannot possibly come for anyone who inhabits a home-made universe created for him by his own fear, greed, malice and anxiety. To help men to overcome these passions is the aim of all ethical teaching; and that overcoming is an essential preliminary and accompaniment to the life of mystical spirituality. Those who imagine that they can achieve illumination without purgation are extremely mistaken. There is a letter addressed by St. Jeanne Chantal to one of the nuns of her order, a letter which should be placed in the hands of every beginner in the art of yoga

or mental prayer. "I" faith,' writes the saint, 'I can well believe it when you say that you do not know what to answer those novices who ask you what is the difference between union and contemplation. Lord God, how is it that my sister the Superior permits them such a thing, or that you permit it in her absence? Dear Jesus, where is humility? You must stop this at once, and give them books and lectures that treat of the practice of the virtues, and tell them that they must first set themselves to doing, and then they can talk about these exalted matters.'

But enough of this first and all too familiar province of our personal kingdom. It is not of the passions, but of those less frequently publicized impediments to the unitive life, distractions that I mean to write in this place.

Contemplatives have compared distractions to dust, to swarms of flies, to the movements of a monkey stung by a scorpion. Always their metaphors call up the image of a purposeless agitation. And this, precisely, is the interesting and important thing about distractions. The passions are essentially purposeful, and the thoughts, emotions and fancies connected with the passions always have more reference to the real or imaginary ends proposed, or to the means whereby such ends may be achieved. With distractions the case is quite different. It is of their essence to be irrelevant and pointless. To find out just how pointless and irrelevant they can be, one has only

to sit down and try to recollect oneself. Pre-occupations connected with the passions will most probably come to the surface of consciousness; but along with them will rise a bobbing scum of miscellaneous memories, notions and imaginings—childhood recollections of one's grandmother's Yorkshire terrier, the French name for henbane, a White-Knightish scheme for catching incendiary bombs in mid air—in a word, every kind of nonsense and silliness. The psycho-analytic contention that all the divagations of the sub-conscious have a deep passionnal meaning cannot be made to fit the facts. One has only to observe oneself and others to discover that we are no more exclusively the servants of our passions and biological urges than we are exclusively rational; we are also creatures possessed of a complicated psycho-physiological machine that is incessantly grinding away and that, in the course of its grinding, throws up into consciousness selections from that indefinite number of mental permutations and combinations which its random functioning makes possible. Most of these permutations and combinations have nothing to do with our passions or our rational occupations; they are just imbecilities—mere casual waste products of psycho-physiological activity. True, such imbecilities may be made use of by the passions for their own ends, as when the Old Adam in us throws up a barrage of intrinsically pointless abstractions in an attempt to nullify the creative efforts of the higher will. But even when not so used by the passions, even in themselves, distractions constitute a formidable obstacle to any kind of spiritual advance. The imbecile within us is as radically

God's enemy as the passionately purposeful maniac, with his insane cravings and aversions. Moreover, the imbecile remains at large and busy long after the lunatic has been tamed or even destroyed. In other words, a man may have succeeded in overcoming his passions and replacing them by a fixed, one-pointed desire for enlightenment—he may have succeeded in this, and yet still be hindered in his advance by the uprush into consciousness of pointless and irrelevant distractions. This is the reason why all advanced spirituals have attached so much importance to such imbecilities and have ranked them as grave imperfections, even as sins. It is, I think, to distractions—or at least to one main class of distractions—that Christ refers in that strangely enigmatic and alarming saying, 'that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words shalt thou be justified and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.' Verbalized idiocies, spoken irrelevances, all utterances, indeed, that do not subserve the end of enlightenment must be classed as impediments, barriers between the soul and ultimate reality. They may seem harmless enough; but this harmlessness is only in relation to mundane things; in relation to spiritual and eternal ends, they are extremely harmful. In this context, I would like to quote a paragraph from the biography of that seventeenth-century French saint, Charles de Condren. A pious lady, named Mlle. de la Roche, was in great distress, because she found it impossible to make a satisfactory confession. 'Her trouble was that her sins seemed to her greater than

she could say. Her faults were not considerable; nevertheless she felt unable, so she said, ever to express them. If the confessor told her that he was content with her accusation of herself, she would answer that she was not satisfied and that, since she was not telling the truth, he could not give her absolution. If he pressed her to tell the whole truth, she found herself utterly incapable of doing so.' Nobody knew what to say to this unfortunate woman, who came in time to be regarded as not quite right in the head. Finally she addressed herself to Condren, who relieved her of her misery by an explanation of her case which is of the highest interest. 'It is true,' he said, 'that you have not adequately expressed your sins; but the fact is that, in this life, it is impossible to represent them in all their hideousness. We shall never know them as they really are, until we see them in the pure light of God. In your case God has given you an impression of the deformity of sin, by which he makes you feel it to be incomparably graver than it appears to your understanding or can be expressed by your words. Hence your anguish and distress. You must therefore conceive of your sins as faith presents them to you, in other words, as they are in themselves; but you must content yourself with describing them in such words as your mouth can form.' All that Condren says about poor Mlle. de la Roche's no doubt very trifling sins applies with equal force to our distractions. Judged by ordinary human standards, they may seem of no account. And yet, as they are in themselves, as they are in relation to the light of God (which they are able completely to eclipse, as

the sun is darkened by a dust storm or a cloud of grasshoppers) these seemingly trifling imperfections are seen to have as great a power for evil in the soul as anger, or an ugly greed, or some obsessive apprehension.

It is because they mistrust the imbecile who, in the body of every human being, cohabits with the criminal lunatic, the easy-going animal, the good citizen and the potential, unawakened, deeply latent saint, it is because they recognize his truly diabolic power, that the contemplatives have always imposed upon themselves and their disciples such rigid self-denial in the matter of all distracting and irrelevant stimuli. The Old Adam's restless curiosity must be checked and his foolishness, his dissipation of spirit turned to wisdom and one-pointedness. That is why the would-be mystic is always told to refrain from busying himself with matters which do not refer to his ultimate goal, or in relation to which he cannot effectively do immediate and concrete good. This self-denying ordinance covers most of the things with which, outside business hours, the ordinary person is mainly preoccupied—news, the day's instalment of the various radio epics, this year's car models and gadgets, the latest fashions. But it is upon fashions, cars and gadgets, upon news and the advertising for which news exists, that our present industrial and economic system depends for its proper functioning. For, as ex-President Hoover pointed out not long ago, this system cannot work unless the demand for non-necessaries is not merely kept up, but continually expanded; and of course it cannot be kept up and expanded except by incessant appeals to greed,

competitiveness and love of aimless stimulation. Men have always been a prey to distractions, which are the original sin of the mind; but never before today has an attempt been made to organize and exploit distractions, to make of them, because of their economic importance, the core and vital centre of human life, to idealize them as the highest mani-

festations of mental activity. Ours is an age of systematized irrelevances, and the imbecile within us has become one of the Titans, upon whose shoulders rests the weight of the social and economic system. Recollectedness, or the overcoming of distractions, has never been more necessary than now; it has also, we may guess, never been so difficult.

O Lord, Thou art the source of infinite energy, do Thou fill me with energy.

Thou art the source of infinite strength, do Thou endow me with strength.

Thou art the source of infinite courage, do Thou inspire me with courage.

Thou art the source of infinite fortitude, do Thou steel me with fortitude.

We offer our salutations to Thee, the Bestower of the good and the auspicious.

We offer our salutations to Thee, the Bestower of Light, Bliss and Peace. May the All-Pervading, the Self of the self, be realised by me.

May the highest bliss be realised by me.

May the All-Pervading Being, the Self of the self, the Highest Bliss, be realised by me.

May my body be pure. May I be free from impurity and sin. May I realize myself as the Light Divine.

May my mind become pure. May I be free from impurity and sin. May I realize myself as the Light Divine.

May my self become pure. May I be free from impurity and sin. May I realize myself as the Light Divine.

The ways of the Divine are not like those of the human mind or according to our patterns, and it is impossible to judge them or to lay down for Him what He shall or shall not do, for the Divine knows better than we can know. If we admit the Divine at all, both true reason and Bhakti (devotion) seem to me to be at one in demanding implicit faith and surrender.—*Sri Aurobindo*.

ELEMENTS OF HINDUISM

(FOR THE MAN IN THE STREET) -

By **Vaidyasastranipuna Dr. L. A. Ravi Varma, M.B.C.M., D.O.M.S.**

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To define Hinduism satisfactorily is as impossible as to define Brahman itself; while affirming that it is this, that and the other, one will have to deny as well that it is neither this, that nor the other. In fact, Hinduism, not being a *single 'religion'* as Christianity or Islam, defies definition in words, though it can be realised and appreciated by its followers. It is not a mere collection of rites and ceremonials; it is not a bundle of moral codes; it covers every human activity and is calculated to subserve *universal welfare* and not merely human welfare. It contains every possible code of good conduct from personal and physical cleanliness to the highest form of social and ethical codes (Dharma factors), various rites and ceremonies as well as Ishtadevatas to suit the mental qualities and natural bent of every type of man (Karma and Bhakti or 'religious' factors), and systems of philosophy to satisfy the different degrees of intellectual capacity (Jnana factors). It is because of this perfect all-inclusiveness that one finds even matters of physical cleanliness, such as rules for ablutions and the like, forming part of Hinduism. The codes of conduct are based on fundamental principles capable of being rendered into practical forms of conduct suited to meet the varying demands of any time and clime. It is on account of this characteristic that it has come to be known by the appellation Sanatanadharma. The rites and ceremonies of the religion

proper are based on sound psychological principles capable of being translated into forms to suit every possible degree of mental development and temperament from that of the little child or the undeveloped hill-man to the highly civilized and cultured superman. The systems of philosophy are so elaborated as to serve any type of intellectual demand brought to bear on it. It is this peculiarity, a well-defined and rational adaptability and universality, that has allowed it to survive these several millenniums against active aggressions and dangerous passive insinuations. It is this same peculiarity that has permitted such opposites as animal sacrifice and Ahimsa to be both part and parcel of Hinduism. Be it noted that Hinduism is the only 'religion' which gives room even to the atheist; for, Nirisvara-samkhya is given the second-best place in the Advaita system. It is this wonderful all-comprehensiveness and catholicity that has preserved it against all odds.

We all know that food of good quality and sufficient quantity is essential for the continued well-being of our bodies. But man is not merely his body like a tree; the best of foods and its fullest supply cannot give man all-round satisfaction. He requires factors to satisfy his mental cravings or the cravings of senses. Even they are not sufficient to satisfy him fully. From very childhood, there is the craving to know the why and wherefore of every phenomenon

around him; this too is a natural craving of man and demands satisfaction. Only when all these three factors are satisfied, will man be really and fully satisfied. As all these have to be well and equally satisfied, one has to be careful to see that measures calculated to satisfy any one of these should in no way be detrimental to the proper satisfaction of the others. If this important point is missed, one misses the whole, *viz.*, the satisfaction of the individual as a whole.

As is the individual, so is society. What is known as Dharma in Hinduism is a principle calculated for the sound upkeep of society as a whole by vouchsafing the satisfaction of all natural demands of its members without hurt, pain or dissatisfaction to any. It is well-known today, that psychological factors, and particularly the sub-conscious factors over which individuals have little or no control, profoundly affect the well-being of the physical body itself. Hence the realm of Dharma does not end with satisfying the material needs of the members of its society; it goes beyond, and penetrates into, all the three spheres, physical, psychological and intellectual.

In the elaborated Dharma codes, the sense and principle underlying such simple rules as injunctions against polluting waters meant for public use (*Napsu mutra-purisham kuryat, na nishthivet . . .*) can easily be understood. But when Dharma penetrates into religious and philosophical fields it may become very difficult indeed to analyse and arrive at the real principle underlying the various specific directions, forms and measures found therein. In many cases, even the

possibility of the existence of a fundamental principle may not be recognisable to any but the most careful observers who have specialised themselves in those fields. But as similar difficulties are well-known even in the realms of positive sciences such as physics and chemistry, the existence of such in ethical and psychological fields need not cause any surprise or disidence. Nor should one belittle the importance of accurate knowledge in such realms by saying, that, as such knowledge is not available to all or most, it is of little use or service to man. It may be here remembered that precisely similar factors do exist in the realms of positive sciences whose existence even may be unknown to the average man, though he himself may be getting the benefit of their knowledge through applied channels elaborated by the scientists. The man in the street who does not know the scientific principles underlying the work-a-day directions of the scientists will, of course, have to follow them, *blindly may be*, if he is to get the benefit of the scientific knowledge his betters possess. And any one who follows the directions, let him know the *rationale* or not, will equally be benefited. The field of medicine is one where the aforesaid fact is being demonstrated every day.

It is true that correct knowledge, at least of an elementary type, is essential even to the man in the street, if his faith is to be kept alive. Unfortunately, with the vanishing of the old Gurukula system, we have lost the scientific workers in the field whose main concern was to keep the torch of the knowledge of Dharma bright and burning so that even the out-of-the-way man may get a kindly

ray to lead him on to the right path. There is no use crying over spilt milk or doting over past greatness. That loss in its turn made people forget the real principles which lay behind the various practical directions and teachings of Hinduism. The same natural instinct that seeks to know the why and wherefore of everything, will always substitute if it fails to find the real factors, some spurious factor which in its estimation is a probable one. This is a well-known psychological principle. This happened in respect of Dharma directions when their real significance was lost sight of, and intangible and often fanciful Adrishta-phalas came to be recognised as the true and underlying principles for most of the Dharma teachings and directions. As Adrishta-phalas is something ununderstandable to most people, and as people were enjoined to carry out the Acharas, if unpleasant results were not to follow, they naturally attached the Adrishta-phala to the actual Achara-form itself. The nett result of this was to render the form of the Achara itself sacrosanct. This is perhaps the greatest ill-luck that has befallen Hinduism. Only when Dharmashastra as a whole is fully and carefully analysed and its real sense and principles ascertained and Acharas remodelled to subserve effectively those principles under modern conditions, will Hinduism ever return to its own. In my humble estimation, therefore, the first and foremost duty of Hindus and lovers of Hinduism—nay, of all human beings, since the goal of Hinduism is Universal welfare—is to exert their best to achieve this one end; to analyse and unearth the true Sana-tana principles underlying the mani-

fold and often apparently contradictory teachings found in every field of Hindu thought, social, religious and philosophical, and to reshape the teachings to suit modern requirements.

Man—as to that, even animal and vegetable kingdoms—cannot live without food. Hence it becomes the first duty of man to earn the wherewithal to satisfy this fundamental need. This wherewithal is what is known as Artha in Hindu thought. It may be the bow and arrow for the hill-man or currency notes or coins for the modern townsman; both are, all the same, Artha, being the means to satisfy certain real needs. Fine arts, books, etc., are as well the wherewithals or Upaya for the satisfaction of natural urges, mental or intellectual. As such, these too fall into the category of Artha. All the three natural urges, physical, mental and intellectual, should be satisfied. No doubt, there is some difference in the degree of the three types of urges; this difference permits of proportionate difference in priority and completeness of satisfaction to be rendered. Sense-enjoyments are as much a real and natural demand as food itself and should be supplied. But these demands are not so urgent as food and can therefore wait for some considerable time; they can also be satisfied in an indirect manner by changing the actual *form* of the demand by a process of *sublimation*. It should, however, be remembered that complete denial, in the form of *repression*, will lead to loss of mental equilibrium—be it ever so little—in the shape of *neuroses* and allied disorders. These in their turn jeopardise physical health as well. These are facts well recognised by

modern medical science. Hence the satisfaction of the senses too are essential for human welfare. Intellect too demands satisfaction. It is through his attempts to satisfy this, that man has attained to his present greatness and mastery. No wonder Hindus considered this to be the only door for Moksha or release from every type of distress and discomfort.

From the above considerations it will be noted that the Artha or Upaya factor, though most prominent in the supply of imperative needs of the physical body, is nevertheless essential for the satisfaction of mental and intellectual needs as well. In other words, Artha occupies such an important position that without its satisfaction of all natural urges becomes impossible. Hence it has become one of the primary instincts of man, the *instinct of possession*.

In man's attempts to satisfy the primary urges, including his attempts to procure the wherewithal required to satisfy the urges, at every step, he is, knowingly or unknowingly, liable to hurt others who are also in the same pursuit; he may himself get hurt. This blind pursuit, involving as it does, inevitable hurt to oneself as well as to others, is what is called the *struggle for existence* by modern scientists. Indian genius elaborated certain plans calculated to help every individual to satisfy his urges in a very satisfactory but disciplined manner, without being a source of hurt or danger to himself as well as others. This constituted the Dharma of Hinduism. Because of its supremely high function it came to occupy the top in Hindu thought and became one of the obligatory pursuits of man. These four pursuits,

Dharma, Artha, Kama (sense satisfaction as a whole) and Moksha (destruction of ignorance), are the four legitimate pursuits of man. If carefully examined, it will be seen that every possible activity of man will fall into one or other of these. And of these four, Dharma is intended to discipline one to follow the other three natural pursuits without danger to oneself or others. It will be noted that there is no repression, no puritanism and no libertinism; the whole planning was perfectly scientific in the most modern sense.

There are certain fundamental differences between Dharma standpoints and those of Western ethical and moral codes; and these are worth remembering. The Hindu code contemplates little of specific individual right; this is replaced by assigning obligatory duties for all and making society itself the warden to enforce them. The claim of individual rights leads to some form of tug-of-war between the claimants and naturally ends in the creation of bad blood and rupture. In passing, I may note that the never-ending wars of modern times are the results of the strong sense of individual rights (national right is essentially the same), and the inordinate pursuit of Artha, the logical outcome of indisciplined desire to increase the *standard of living*, which is nothing other than the unlimited satisfaction of the senses. Even the plan of assigning obligatory duty may end in bad blood and rupture—though much less vehement than in the case of demands of individual rights — even when impersonal society itself acts as the warden to enforce the duties. To reduce this friction to the lowest possible limits, they planned a system

of training both at home and in Gurukulas calculated to ensure the creation and maintenance of correct conduct as a second nature. From the evidence we find in literature we have every reason to believe that the plan was quite successful. The utter loss of this system of training is the severest blow from which Hinduism has suffered. This loss was not the result of any intrinsic flaw in it, but was due to the interaction of multifarious foreign forces beyond the control of any single polity. Gurukulas were the heart and centre of this training; they were as well the centre of culture and knowledge. When they vanished, all training for good citizenship also vanished; the principles on which the actual directions of conduct were framed were forgotten leaving the lifeless directions alone with a sacrosanct halo around them to serve more as an impediment to progress than as a help.

The relation that exists between the directions of good conduct, Acharas, and the underlying principle is often subtle and difficult to be seen. The relation can best be explained by analogy. Every modern man would have heard of aseptic and antiseptic *rituals* zealously followed by the surgeons of the Western system. Even those eminent surgeons may, if casually asked, reply that the rituals are to *destroy pathogenic bacteria*, though they know fully well that destruction of germs is not their aim, but *protection* of their patients. If tomorrow, a better and easier method comes into existence, a method entirely different both in form and conception from the one now followed, every surgeon will follow it without a second thought! But if the surgeons

are not aware of the rationale underlying either of the rituals, they will most assuredly stick to the old forms endowing them with some fanciful sanctity. This is often the case in the field of Ayurveda. In the analogy, surgical rituals stand for Acharas and the underlying principle, for Dharma-tatvas or Dharma. Want of knowledge is the defect which produces an effect in the shape of leech-like attachment to lifeless forms. This is what we see in India today. The only remedy is to unearth and bring to view the real and underlying principle.

This, however, is not so easy, particularly in social fields, against the concerted opposition from the majority who are often ignorant and to whom, therefore, the Acharas are all in all and sacrosanct. Such people even resent a proper analytical study of Dharmasastras and quote such texts as "*Srulistu vedo vijneyo dharmasastram tu vai smritih te sarvartheshvamimamsye tabhyam dharma hi nirbabhau*" etc., to support their contention, without considering that equally clear statements such as "*Keralam sastram asritya na kartavyo vinirnayah yuktihinavicare tu dharmahanih prajayate*" etc., do exist urging to analyse and study the Acharas. In fact, the great majority of texts do positively favour scientific study of Dharmasastra.

Again, in the study of Hinduism in general and of Acharas in particular, one should not lose sight of a very important factor. To the Hindu the only absolute and unchallengeable authority is Sruti in its entirety; Smritis derive their authority only in so much as they reflect Sruti thoughts. Every Smriti translates only the Sruti thoughts into the form

of Acharas or directions to suit the then existing environments. As such, any Smriti direction, even if it is opposed to existing Acharas, may be followed by a Hindu with impunity, as the Achara he selects is as well based on Sruti authority which no one is competent to question. Even this, the Hindu society as a whole is not yet prepared to subscribe to, though it realises fully that some change of attitude is urgent and unavoidable.

If the difficulties encountered are so great even in the case of social Acharas, where more than 90 per cent are of the Drishtarthata-tatva type, the difficulties in the realms of religion and philosophy proper, where the underlying sense is not so patent, may be deemed to be greater. But they are actually less. For, in the realm of pure religion, Puranas and Tantras have largely explained and brought out the underlying sense; in philosophy it is easier still, as it primarily deals with the principles themselves, and one encounters little of Achara there. Further, giant intellects like Sankara have thrashed out every problem and exposed the real and underlying principles. Again, in social realms, even the ill-equipped man can get in and have his say, whereas he fights shy of the other two fields as they are too subtle for him. All told, greater difficulties are encountered in the social field than in the other two.

Basing on certain definite and scientific principles, Hinduism elaborated measures with meticulous care to aid men to live a full life by satisfying his physical, mental and intellectual requirements in an ethical and aesthetic manner. These measures fall into three distinct classes; those

involving mainly physical or mechanical discipline, those requiring a high degree of mental disciplining and training, and those demanding deep and close intellectual application. Though in actual practice few forms can be exclusively put into any one of the classes, the classification is valid and essential for purposes of study.

The mainly-mechanical disciplining portion is known as Karma stage (Karma-kanda) and is intended for all as a first and necessary step of training to enable one to control oneself in every activity so that one may not become a source of pain and danger to oneself or others. This is best suited for childhood and those lacking in mental capacity to go to the higher step; in other words, such are the Adhikaris for this stage. This may be considered as the first rung of the ladder leading to the highest attainment possible for man. Very little thinking is called for here; the only essential requirement here is full and loyal obedience to the rules and regulations. Though the general rules and regulations appear to be severe and rigid, there are permissible variations to suit any set of circumstances. These variations are what are known as Apaddharmas. It can easily be seen that the main principle holds good in all these variations. The essential characteristic is to render the following of the rules a *little difficult necessitating the exercise of some control*. It should be distinctly understood that the control called for is only *little* which even a child can well undertake. This control, when properly done for a fairly long period, say upto the age of sixteen or twenty, will ensure very serviceable self-control for the

follower. One should get up at such and such a time, conduct ablutions and bath in such a manner, should repeat such and such Mantras in such and such attitude, should use only such and such articles, etc., are the forms this disciplining may take. Such rules and regulations cover every possible activity of man. These rules are never taught in the form of book-knowledge; the followers are merely *trained to live according to these rules*, the guru or the parents directing them and pointing out the manner of doing them properly. The actual forms may differ from place to place, and may even change with time; but when once accepted they should be observed fully and loyally; nor is one permitted to make innovations to suit one's fancy or immediate convenience, as both these processes are very apt to deprive them of their essential quality, *viz.*, the power to create and strengthen the capacity to control. This military-like discipline produces an efficiency in those who systematically follow it exactly as a well disciplined army acquires efficiency. This resulting efficiency is the Apurva of Karma-kanda, a something which was not originally present and which cannot be considered as the direct result of the Acharas *per se*. Besides this Apurva or efficiency, the training also makes correct conduct a second nature for its followers. The only call on the follower is to submit to the training, which any one can do, if willing. The results are a rare and valuable efficiency and self-control for oneself enabling one to meet any condition cheerfully; and for others, actual and real freedom from trouble at the hands of the so trained. The nett gain that accrues is hence immense

and out of all proportion to the trouble one may have to undergo to acquire it.

The second step is known as Bhakti-marga. At its highest stage, this Marga has little play for rules and regulations, though in its earliest stages, there is little difference from the former step in practice. In place of the mere passive obedience required in Karma-marga, unquestioning and active faith is the essential qualification here. The form of faith required is this: That there is an Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Merciful God who is the Lord and Dispenser of destinies; and that those who live in accordance with His Laws and with full faith in Him, He will protect from all dangers here and hereafter. From the cradle onwards and quite sub-consciously, man acquires this faith from the lips of his parents and in due course gets strengthened by the conduct of those he sees around him. Note that this faith is of a *dependency form* or Asraya-bhava. As the child grows up into a man he gets acquainted with many Asritasraya-bhavas as between son and father, Sishya and guru, friend and friend, wife and husband, and so on. And in the course of his growth, for various reasons, he comes to have a stronger faith in one of the forms known to him. By the time a child becomes a man his psychological nature too would have assumed certain characteristics. Broadly speaking such characteristics may be classed into three: a quiet and introspective attitude ready to absorb experiences, but shy and unwilling to make an exhibition thereof (satva-guna); very active in all spheres and loving show and power (rajo-guna); and dull and apathetic attitude

towards everything, always grumbling against fate and never willing to move his little finger for anything (*tamo-guna*). On a permutation-combination basis of all available Bhavas and Guna peculiarities, God is conceived and formulated in the form of Ishtadevatas to suit every possible type of individuals. The spiritual guru, recognising the Bhava and Guna characteristics of the Sishya, selects that form of Ishtadevata most *in tune* with the Sishya's make-up, and teaches the Sishya to serve that Ishtadevata as his God. By this means the Sadhaka's faith and Asraya-bhava get a chance to attach themselves to a personal, name-form god in tune with the Sadhaka in Guna and Bhava-characteristics.

Bhakti in its essential aspect is both *Dvaita* and *Saguna* in form. The Bhakta is now taught to consider his personal god or Ishtadevata as his ever present support, his *Paramasraya*. He is told that his god sees all the acts of the Bhakta, enjoys the devotions and services rendered by him and in return grants results in accordance with the degree of faith and Asraya and the nature and quality of the doings of the Bhakta. God is thus postulated as the enjoyer of acts done by man and dispenser of results. It may here be noted that every 'religion' in the world is shaped in this form, more or less. The Bhakta is also told that his god likes such and such ways of living and dislikes certain other ways. These are based on established ethical codes, and help to make the Bhakta live a clean and straight life. When a loving father or mother chastises an youngster, even though it gives him immediate pain he does not

resent it, but only cherishes it in the faith that it is really for his future good. In the same manner, when calamities happen to the Bhakta, he takes them with equanimity, fully believing that his god has dispensed to him what is best for him in the long run. The nett result of Bhakti is to secure a perfect mental equanimity under all conditions. This is no small gain. This step or *Bhaktimarga* operates on sub-conscious psychological factors or 'Manah'.

The third step or *Jnana-marga* belongs to the sphere of intellect and takes the form of rational thinking and active introspection. By a logical process of generalisation, the personal and *Saguna* god of the Bhakta now becomes the Impersonal Universal God devoid of qualities, The Brahman Eternal. He is no more an enjoyer of acts or dispenser of results. Pursuing further, the aspirant begins to recognise and realise that there can be nothing other than an Ultimate Existence without qualities and hence unknowable though fully realisable. It now comes to him that the qualities recognised and *actually felt by the Bhaktas* were not its real or essential qualities but only relative or *Adhyaropita* ones recognisable only from certain specific standpoints. This is not metaphysics, but pure physics. Suppose a man standing in a train moving at a uniform velocity lets go a stone from his hand; the stone will fall at his feet. To that man the trajectory of the stone is a straight line; *i.e.*, from his standpoint the Guna of that trajectory is straight. To an observer stationed outside the train, the self-same trajectory will appear as a curved line, as part of a parabola. If you can imagine one as

sitting on the stone itself, there will be no trajectory experienced by him precisely as we do not recognise the motion of this big stone, the earth, in which we remain though it is proceeding at a tremendous velocity. In other words, the trajectory has no definite quality of its own. The same is the case with Brahman, and Advaita recognises it. Brahman has no quality of its own, though when viewed from different standpoints it appears to have various and different recognisable qualities. To one who has realised Brahman, *i.e.*, to one who is *in It*, It has not even a separate existence from him. This is the sense of 'Aham Brahmasmi' of the Advaitin. Thus it will be seen that to one who has realised the Truth, The Whole Universe including oneself can be no other than the One and only Ultimate That. This realisation frees him from every 'Dvandvas' as pain-pleasure etc. This is not a negative aspect, but a real and positive one. Even an ordinary man can understand that pain and pleasure are relative and not absolute. Music is pleasing to most human beings, but even to the music-mad, a Nero fiddling when Rome is burning, is positively disgusting and

painful. Pain or pleasure does not reside in the music itself, it resides in the total psychological content of the hearer. It is essentially subconscious and is the result of old acquired notions. As soon as these old acquired notions are analysed, the true nature of the pain-pleasure sense will be revealed, the erstwhile desire to enjoy or avoid suffering—in fact the very sense of enjoyment or suffering—will vanish. In other words, to one who has arrived at the real Truth there is no more pain or pleasure; he is uniformly and perfectly serene under all circumstances. The Jnana-marga is, hence, a process of psycho-analysis. It is not merely a simple auto-analysis, but a full and universal analysis.

Thus Hinduism has for its physical body, its Karma portion, for its mind the Bhakti portion or religion proper, while Jnana penetrates the whole and sustains it as its very life-principle. Hinduism is not a sectarian religion, though any sectarian form can well be considered as forming part of Hinduism. It appreciates every endeavour in the right direction; and to it The Right Direction is that which leads to *Universal Welfare*.

I find myself standing, tired and afraid, on the dreary and sandy shore of the ocean of life. Furious are the waves; the wind is high, yet I must go across. Looking back, I realise that darkness is approaching fast. Am I to perish? No, a heavenly voice assures me there is nothing to fear. Divine power, infinite energy, and endless love are within. My divine self, like a huge boat, will lead me across this turbulent ocean of life. It pacifies all disturbance; it adds new vigour and energy to my consciousness. It fills me with a new hope. It adds a divine radiance to every atom of my body.—*Swami Gnaneswarananda*.

WHY AND HOW TO WORSHIP SRI RAMAKRISHNA¹

By Sister Savitri²

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, as all other Incarnations, appeals to each of us in a different way. I shall state here how he attracts me. My Master, Swami Abhedenandaji Maharaj, used to speak of him as the emblem of Truth Absolute in the realization of Vedanta.

Truth was his carrier and Vedanta his goal. He stuck to Truth in all circumstances, and, more than anything else, was true to himself. Ordinary people hide their own defects in order to bring their virtues into prominence. But he could never rest content till the last and least speck of impurity was removed.

One knows how his genuine simplicity coupled with true knowledge attracted great scholars to his feet. But is that enough for worship? No. A dry knowledge doesn't appeal. His was the knowledge of Love in Eternal Oneness. He loved Truth, he loved the Lord, he loved the children of the Lord—the poor, the rich, the bad, the conceited and the humble. To his sincere soul they were all different manifestations of the Divine Mother. Truly and in essence, the Mother, they and he were all One. With Divinity so intermixed, seeing God alive in all, he was but a living mirror himself of the infinitely compassionate One—the abstract Truth embodied.

Unlike others who pass as great men in the world, he never sought fame, nor exhibited himself, nor

became engaged in arguments to earn credit for erudition. He always preferred to have his towering greatness covered by his natural garb of humility.

Truly, as the Holy Mother, his pure and divine consort said, he took birth to become an example of true renunciation, which is so difficult in our modern days.

All the actions of his life and all the words of his mind were dictated by his profound consciousness of the Spirit as a living reality. Woman was to him the Divine Mother. He saw and realized this as everything else without any effort. One of his great teachings to humanity at large is to see and respect those whom they call wives as Mothers. It reminds me of a friend who once wrote an interesting article wherein he attributed the downfall of the Aryans to having reduced the ideal of womanhood from that of the 'Mother' to that of the 'Wife'. Woman was revered when she was the 'Janani', mother of all, but once looked upon as wife, she became servant. Though his instructions varied with the character of his pupils and devotees, he would invariably warn each and all of the snares of delusion that wait patiently to strike at the weak point and moment in the aspirant's life. Allowing them at times a respite to enjoy the world, he knew them to be bitten by the black cobra (meaning

¹ An address delivered at Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum, on the occasion of the celebration of the 100th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

² A European disciple of Swami Abhedenanda and an ardent follower of Sri Ramakrishna.

his own influence) and succeeded thus to win them back.³

His nature, constantly swimming in the Divine, was so imbued with purity that he could not stand the proximity of anything impure or false. The story is told of the greatest of his disciples Swami Vivekananda, who, with a view to test his Master, hid unobserved a coin underneath Sri Ramakrishna's bedding. As soon as the Master touched the bed, he felt a shooting pain rising up his body. Every one was amazed to know afterwards that it was due to the hidden coin. Another instance is that of a boy who once spread a seat for the Master. The boy was generally known to be of good conduct, but Sri Ramakrishna rebuked him for spreading the seat as he felt instinctively that he had some impure association. Later events proved the truth of the Master's reaction. All these demonstrate his unswerving adherence to his ideal. This doesn't mean that he shunned the company of sinners. He would tell them on the contrary, 'What if you have erred? Say so, cleanse your heart and pray to God with tears to bestow His Grace upon you. He is every one's "own", and all have equal claim on Him. Verily He is ever compassionate to the sincere.' Those who are too anxious to demonstrate their goodness and virtues, he would

gently warn saying, 'You are good and pious men, aren't you? Well, why are you anxious that all the world should know of your actions? Is it not enough that the Lord within knows it?' Prepared in this way, all classes of devotees gradually became fit for his grace as a result of which they became endowed with unshaking faith and unrelaxing perseverance in the pursuit of their different Sadhanas (spiritual practices). On this point Sri Ramakrishna was most strict. He never allowed slackness in those who wanted to succeed. I have heard from a reliable source in Calcutta, of a man employed in some service, who came across some one in his younger days, who casually happened to tell him that the only way to salvation in this Kaliyuga was the repetition of the name of Sri Ramakrishna. This gentleman lost no time in his earnestness to reach the goal, and began faithfully and unswervingly to practise the same, rising in the dead of night and repeating the Name till the early hours of the morning. He went on likewise for a year and more, but noticed no results at all. Yet he continued on and on, never giving way to discouragement and impatience. Years passed by. He still kept working in his office and spent each night in the preparation for realization as would a student for his examination. Faith stood by him all the way, and after many long years had passed—five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years of patient striving and waiting, he at last realized and reached the fulfilment of his desire, when the effulgent vision of the Lord stood before him in the form of the one whose Name he had been so faithfully repeating.

³ The allusion is to what Sri Ramakrishna used to tell some of his disciples on whom he did not impose an austere discipline all of a sudden because of their strong worldly tendencies. He used to say, "But how long will they continue in their ways. They have been bitten by a cobra, not a water snake," meaning that like the poison of a cobra his influence would work on them unfailingly in a short time.

Such determination is needed to reach the goal. Sri Ramakrishna showed the triviality of man's yearning for goods and riches, for name, fame, and pleasures. All such must be discarded from every cell of one's blood to realize the Lord. It is one or the other, never both! All his life was a fire of renunciation. He never hesitated to kill his innermost feelings, if they did not collaborate in his endeavours to realize the Truth. All he did was true and all he wanted was the Truth. Desires had no place in his heart except those for the welfare of the devotees.

He never imposed his ideas on any one. There is the incident of the person who wouldn't be convinced by his statements and entreaties but was nevertheless advised by another to yield to his opinion; whereupon Sri Ramakrishna sharply reprimanded him saying, 'Don't you know that to accept a thing in which you don't believe is hypocrisy?'

Unlike other saints he did not remain satisfied after having attained realization for himself. His love for mankind was too great; so much so that he would readily beg one not to believe in God, if he saw that his liberation was easier that way.⁴ Where else to hear of such power of love and sacrifice?

Even without any external teachers he perfected himself and attained to God realization by the sheer power of his will, and later on he got the same experience with the help of different teachers and scripture-ordained methods. Every country in

the world sees life from a peculiar angle; gradually its ideas get set and lose their mobility. But Sri Ramakrishna could judge things with such detachment and catholicity that he could be described as the most universal and yet most individual among the world's great teachers. Society is unsympathetic and highly critical of everything that is not ordinary, but Sri Ramakrishna cared not for social criticisms when to him there was no more world and body consciousness and when in the joy of the Lord he sang and danced in ecstasy. He was the very out-shoot of the Lord, his home was the Infinite and his happiness lay in it. He often compared this joy he felt when his mind soared in the true abode of peace and bliss to that of a fish when thrown back into water.

It is a great thing when sceptics are persuaded, but it is even greater when their hearts are conquered. That was what Sri Ramakrishna did when, in reply to the sceptical question about the existence of God, he answered in his own innocent way that God not only existed but that he saw him even more distinctly than he saw the world. The one to whom this reply was given as also several others even gave up their homes and became the ardent missionaries of the teachings which they at first despised but which they accepted with all their heart as the realizations of him whom they had learnt to worship as the Infinite Truth Incarnate.

Indeed, to me, as an ideal, he fulfils all the needs of the heart and the head. Where is then the necessity for seeking the personality and teachings of past Avatars when our times were blessed with this recent Incarnation of Divinity whose per-

⁴ This refers to his attaching less importance to the means, provided the goal be reached, (*i.e.*, faith in personal or impersonal God; in divinity or non-Theistic Absolute).

fection is unexcelled by any? Cry unto him like a helpless child, remembering his own distressed days when he cried unto the Mother likewise, and will he not with his loving heart feel your pain and come to you? Be his servant, and he being the Master of our heart, will he not guide us along the right path? Has he, who was Truth in human form, ever been untrue to anyone? Why should we fear, then, that he will be untrue to us? It is for us to be true to him! When the heart seeks its beloved, nothing else attracts it; no fire can hinder it, no water can drown it. When the part really misses the whole, they are reunited, just as the magnet attracts the steel. Be his part, and he will attract you. Be his, and one shall never be parted again. The balance of his teachings lies in no emphasis upon the feelings and sentiments, yet demanding full offering of the same unto the Lord.⁵ To believe in him is to know him as still alive. For Truth ever lives. Love ever dwells where Truth abides. Whether at first persuaded or not of his divinity, one may rest assured that by worshipping with all one's heart a Being of such complete realization and true renunciation, one is drawn nearer and nearer to God until all the doubts of our heart are finally dispelled.

I worship him not because he was a man, nor a God, but because he is that transcendent Divinity come to us in such a human way—a way in which no other Saint could excel him

for he fulfilled each Bhakta's desires in himself, even those of the Jnanis (men of knowledge). He always took up the attitude of the deity seated within the heart of his devotees. And some saw him actually transform himself into the form of divinity they loved. There was Gopal-Ma, for example, who was fortunate enough, while paying visits to him and offering him her respects, to come instead face to face with her beloved child Gopala, stretching his tender hands towards her. Mathur Babu was struck at the sight he saw when the Master pacing up and down the temple verandah, appeared in one way as Shiva and in the other as Kali.

To some he revealed himself in their hearts as their chosen ideal. This experience is not to die with his passing away; many are those who are blessed with such revelations even today, both in the East and in the West. Who but an Incarnation could thus fulfill all religious attitudes to their climax? And not only that, but impart such attitudes to those who are qualified for them? Who could always divine their mind's turn and heart's desire? Such love and discrimination, such mastery of mind, and yet such great feelings—where are they to be found elsewhere? Great Rishis may attract crowds of amateur Yogis. Those who give their life for knowledge and Mukti go to them and are satisfied. Saints and Bhaktas may impart the overflowing reservoir of love to all who sing the holy Name. But the wicked and the sinful are not redeemed by them, and those who are Jnanis, men of knowledge, who believe in the formless aspect of the divinity, seldom possess the sweet emotion of love.

⁵ For example, the joy of great emotional feelings often causes the aspirant to become fascinated by the same, and unless he should be master of his senses, this may lead him into erotic sentimentalism instead of renunciation and self-surrender.

In the case of Sri Ramakrishna, however, there was not a poor wretch whom he left without a word of consolation, without a ray of hope illuminating his depressed mind. Nor did any wise man ever go to him without being struck by the manifestation in him of that for which he was himself striving with intense asceticism and labour of mind. There was no worldly-minded person that did not perceive new horizons in the company of this simple, God-intoxicated man who could speak to him with sympathy and understand his troubles. Nor was there a Bhakta who failed to find in him his ideal and was ready to surrender all he had and he was at his blessed feet.

Now, in our days of selfishness, envy, and littleness, what is our duty to him who had no stain of egoism? His life has showed us the way and his direct disciples have set us the example by first treading that way.

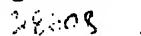
Like the Great Buddha he sternly resolved first: 'Let this body wither away and die today if I cannot attain the Supreme.' In the early part of his life he risked his life, mind, and soul in this hazardous enterprise, and in the later he declared with the same intensity of will and passion: 'Let me undergo a thousand births and deaths if thereby even a single soul is saved.'

There is, however, no use in simply hearing about him and admiring him, nor even in worshipping him. It will not bring about any spiritual transformation in us unless we become the very shadow of his teachings—that is, unless we try to become like him. For the law of spiritual life is not simply admiring and receiving, but being and becoming.

The whole of our being has to bend and lay its head at the feet of him whom we revere. Then when it rises with his own breath, at his will and command, it becomes pure and conscious of his presence. Simple faith in the divine is all that is required for this attainment. As the English say: 'Pack up your troubles and smile.' Let a devotee who is in the grip of cares, pack his troubles and instead of seeing his own misery, attend, like their Master, to the misery of others. Let even those who have reached a high stage of Sadhana be prepared to have their peace and quietness disturbed if need be, for conferring that peace and quietness on those who are suffering. For true devotees are they who have the courage to give up even Mukti for the sake of serving others. Theirs is not a temperament that remains satisfied by merely receiving! Their motto should be: 'All for Thee and Thee alone!' Smile and serve; where are the worries when we leave them behind to live in Him? Why spend a whole life in anxiety and fear lest the little progress in Sadhana should not be lost? The spiritual life is never fostered by a miserly temperament. One must strive and persevere; not, however, in a spirit of selfishness but of love. One becomes a child of Sri Ramakrishna not merely by calling oneself so but by worshipping him in spirit, which consists in serving all as *Living Narayana*. The Infinite, the Absolute, the relative, this universe, and each soul that lives—all put together form what is called God, the sum total of all existence. In this conception each soul is a part of the same energy, a part of His heart.

To serve him, through our daily duties and through others requires a greater spirit of renunciation than Mukti seeking. Mukti is the joy of freedom for ourselves alone—rather a selfish aim in a way. Service out of love frees one from worldliness and desires better than any other Sadhana. Let the Lord, for whom our minds shall renounce all personal

interests, see to our Mukti. Trust Him to give in time what He thinks fit, for our hearts hold no secrets to Him. When we see the world as One, none is a stranger, none is outside God. Verily, we are all One!

And let us bow our heads in love and reverence before the One who is specially being remembered as *The Purest Ideal.* 

The more advanced a society or nation is in spirituality, the more is that society or nation civilized. No nation can be said to have become civilized only because it has succeeded in increasing the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machinery and things of that sort. The present-day civilization of the West is multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men. On the other hand, the ancient Indian civilization, by showing people the way to spiritual advancement, doubtless succeeded, if not in removing once for all, at least in lessening, in a great measure, the material needs of men. In the present age, it is to bring into coalition both these civilizations that Sri Ramakrishna was born. In this age, as on the one hand people have to be intensely practical, so on the other hand they have to acquire spiritual knowledge.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

When there dawns the real knowledge of Brahman, all attachment for the world, all pleasure in 'Woman (man) and Gold' disappears. There comes then a perfect cessation of all passions. While burning, wood makes a crackling noise, when it is wholly burnt and reduced to ashes, no more do you hear the sound. With the destruction of attachment, the keenness of the thirst for pleasure also disappears; finally comes Peace. He can never be attained if there be even a little of attachment. Thread can never pass through the eye of a needle if there be the least protruding fibre.

The more you approach God, the more you will feel Peace, Supreme Peace. The nearer you go to the Ganges, the greater you will feel the coolness,—still cooler will you feel on bathing.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE SELF IS ITS OWN FRIEND AND FOE

By Br. Balakrishna

LIFE is the greatest gift of Nature and the fondest possession of creatures. But it is not an uncommon occurrence that when all the living world indicate devotion to it instinctively a few among the most gifted of Nature's creation strike a discordant note by deliberately preferring death to life. This choice of death may be prompted by unendurable torment, gnawing discontent, darkest despondency, or stark lunacy. The fatally subjective mood of those who are bent on self-slaughter reveals that they aim at subjective correction and not objective rectification. Circumstances alone are not adequate to engender the desire to end life when the will is absent; and this 'will' again springs directly from life. We notice that desire for self-slaughter arises even in the minds of highly evolved human beings at times. It would not be wrong, therefore, to conclude that man's nature is a peculiar blend of two tendencies: a poignant wish to live, even against odds, and a desire to end life, at least in the case of some individuals, at certain moments of extreme stress.

Intelligence and freedom have made life perhaps sweeter to man than to other creatures. He enriches life in innumerable ways. Naturally life must be as dear to man, even to the worst criminal, at least as it is to birds and beasts. But there are a few who actually weigh life and find it wanting as it does not help them for a higher and greater purpose. They consider life an inferior gift or perhaps an evil. They are seized with a 'divine discontent'. It was in such a mood of discontent that

Sri Ramakrishna, despairing of the vision of the Divine, lay hold of the sword to put an end to his life. And the Universal Mother revealed Herself to him at the acme of his anguish. In such cases Nature produces an exalted type of humanity. When less evolved souls resort to the same means, although the discontent may be there, the response from above is not received.

Man's zest for life, especially as it is lived in the senses, is the result of his instinctive desire, which he possesses in common with all creatures, to perpetuate himself. But why should man lift his own hand against himself? In the sub-human species the forces of instinct alone are manifest; but in man intelligence emerges. By exercise of this special endowment man sees life through and is convinced of its inadequacy; he therefore wants to do away with it—this may be a convincing argument. For after rational enquiry into the meaning of life wise men have come to the conclusion that life should be a preparation for death. Socrates said, 'The wise man seeks death all his life and therefore death is not terrible to him.' In the Upanishads also we read that he indeed is the suicide, Atmahan, who loses himself in sense life.

Man is endowed with a will free to make choices. He develops the sense of right and wrong. Perception of error creates in him new conflicts leading to new ascent. Man falls into error, becomes discontented and restless, and then starts higher life. His free will which leads him to error indirectly helps him to the

search for something higher. It is a gift of God, a spark of that supreme will; and it enables him eventually to free himself from the opposites of good and evil and the meshes of ignorance.

The true self of man is an eternal mode of God submerged in the unreal imperfections which he believes for a time to be his true nature. Nevertheless from under the morass of ignorance this true self never fails to illumine life. Such a faith alone saves one from despair and self-demolition and supports even those who are convinced beyond doubt of the uselessness of life. Our everyday life is an unconscious affirmation of this underlying reality. When we rise from material life we regain our Divine heritage. We then pass from unconscious perfection, through conscious imperfection, to perfection. God helps us in this upward striving. With adversity He cuts through the even tenour of our lives and gains glimpses of our real nature. Then the man of genius, of strength, the hero, sees the infinite, absolute, ever-blissful Existence. The shackles that bind the soul to this hole of misery break, and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord.

But adversity makes men saints as well as suicides. For it ministers differently to different men. In adversity the world seems to the average man to be an impenetrable sheet of misery. Then the internal eyes open and intuitively one comes face to face with the grandest mystery in Nature—Existence. But

the ordinary man with his dim vision sees not rightly.

Death is not cessation of life, but passage into future states of moral discipline for the soul's spiritual benefit, so that it may ultimately recognize and return to its divine nature. Birth and death are imposed on the individual soul, not once but numerous times till the soul turns its steps towards a return home. Life is not a mere casual emergence of a transitory principle that appears at birth and vanishes at death. It is more than birth and death. It overflows both and presses both into its service.

The absence of 'divine discontent' on the sub-human or even lower human plane and its appearance on the higher human plane marks a significant stage in organic evolution. Suicidal desire in the case of highly evolved men vindicates the perfection that lies eclipsed in them through a negative process, namely, doing away with material existence. The principle of progress from lower to higher truth is a principle of negation. And that is why only a Ramakrishna emerges from such circumstance.

The peculiar propensity to love life at one time and to end it at another may be thus explained. The wish for self-destruction forces the conclusion that the wish for existence and the wish for self-spoliation both belong to Life. But Life lies submerged under an unreal life; the affirmation of the real life can come only through the negation of the unreal. All self-abnegation has an element of this.

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHER

Religion, which is the highest knowledge and the highest wisdom, cannot be bought, nor can it be acquired from books. You may thrust your head into all the corners of the world, you may explore the Himalayas, the Alps, and the Caucasus, you may sound the bottom of the sea, and pry into every nook of Tibet and the desert of Gobi, you will not find it anywhere, until your heart is ready for receiving it, and your teacher has come. And when that divinely appointed teacher comes, serve him with childlike confidence and simplicity, freely open your heart to his influence, and see in him God manifested. Those who come to seek truth with such a spirit of love and veneration, to them the Lord of Truth reveals the most wonderful things regarding Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Wherever His name is spoken, that very place is holy. How much more so is the man who speaks His name, and with what veneration ought we to approach that man out of whom comes to us spiritual truth ! Such great teachers of spiritual truth are indeed very few in this world, but the world is never altogether without them. They are always the fairest flowers of human life, the ocean of mercy without any motive. 'Know the Guru (spiritual teacher) to be Me', says Sri Krishna in the Gita. The moment the world is absolutely bereft of these, it becomes a hideous hell and hastens on to its own destruction.

Higher and nobler than all ordinary ones are another set of teachers, the Avatars of Ishvara (Incarnations of God), in the world. They can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and the most degraded characters, become in one second saints at their command. They are the Teachers of all teachers, the highest manifestations of God through man. We cannot see God except through Them. We cannot help worshipping Them; and indeed They are the only ones whom we are bound to worship.

No man can really see God except through these human manifestations. There is a story of an ignorant man who was asked to make an image of the God Shiva, and who, after days of hard struggle, manufactured only the image of a monkey. So, whenever we try to think of God as He is in His absolute perfection, we invariably meet with the most miserable failure; because, as long as we are men, we cannot conceive Him as anything higher than man. The time will

come when we shall transcend our human nature and know Him as He is; but as long as we are men, we must worship Him in man and as man. Two kinds of men do not worship God as man: the human brute who has no religion, and the Paramahamsa, who has risen beyond all the weaknesses of humanity, and has transcended the limits of his own human nature. The human brute does not worship because of his ignorance, and the Jivanmuktas (free souls) do not worship because they have realized God in themselves.

God understands human failings and becomes man to do good to humanity. 'Whenever virtue subsides and wickedness prevails, I manifest Myself. To establish virtue, to destroy evil, to save the good, I come from Yuga (age) to Yuga.' 'Fools deride Me, who have assumed the human form, without knowing My real nature as the Lord of the universe.' Such is Sri Krishna's declaration in the *Gita* on Incarnation. 'When a huge tidal wave comes,' says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, 'all the little brooks and ditches become full to the brim without any effort or consciousness on their own part; so when an Incarnation comes, a tidal wave of spirituality breaks upon the world, and people feel spirituality almost full in the air.'—*Swami Vivekananda.*

O Lord my God, give to my heart to long for Thee; longing, to seek; seeking, to find; finding, to love; loving, to redeem my evils; redeemed, not to renew them. Give, O Lord my God, to my heart penitence; to my spirit contrition; to my eyes fountains of tears; to my hands bounteousness of alms. O my King, extinguish in me the desires of the flesh, and kindle in me the fires of Thy love. O my Redeemer, drive forth from me the spirit of pride, and graciously give me the spirit of Thy humility. O my Saviour, remove from me the madness of anger, and kindly bestow upon me the shield of patience. O my Creator, tear up from me rancour of mind, and in Thy gentleness dispense to me sweetness of disposition. Give me, O most merciful Father, firm faith, befitting hope, increasing charity.—*Anselm.*

GOD AS REALITY

By P. G. Narayana, M.A.

PHILOSOPHY is only an attempt to get a glimpse of the ultimate, and its theories need not necessarily be final. It is too much for any one, however gifted, to claim to know the truth in its entirety; what he succeeds at best in getting is only a partial view of Reality. God does not pose for philosophers to snap Him, remaining quiet, composing his features, and looking His best. God is not a fixed principle in the sense that we can exhaust His attributes by a few stringed epithets. No doubt, they seek to reveal some of His qualities, but they are too endless for any effort to measure. Religion will certainly fail in its aim and endeavour if it postulate a callous rigidity as the most characteristic virtue of God: bigotry digs the grave of every belief. But it does not mean that God does change either, shifting His ground every now and

then, to elude or baffle man's curiosity.

The whole scheme of creation is so vast and subtle that it is sheer folly to maintain any particular theory with dogmatic tenacity. Time and again, prophets have appeared and disclosed new angles of vision, but they should not be taken as the only messengers of the Divine. They have taught according to the needs of the hour, and have not given a permanent charter. It is impossible to chart eternity, fixing the bounds of land and sea, and pointing out the depths and shoals, the peaks and plains. What can with safety and certainty be averred is the infinitude of Providence and Its inscrutability. We cannot traverse the whole course; it is enough—and this alone is possible—if we cruise in our limited seas and finish our voyage, happy in the knowledge we gain.

What I want to propagate is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds, it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic and equally conducive to action. Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their mind all the elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and of work were equally present in their whole intensity. That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character I consider 'one-sided', and this world is mostly full of such 'one-sided' men, with knowledge of that road only in which they move, and anything else is dangerous and terrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is my ideal of religion.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Tantrik Yoga: By J. Marques Riviere. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pages xiv + 126. Price 6 sh. net.

This book is an attempt to interpret the living message of Asia to the Western world, which in its pursuit of physical science and material happiness has become somewhat indifferent to the claims of the spirit. The author finds the West 'a field of battle, covered with the dying and the dead', and goes to the East 'to acquire deep wisdom and peace'. He succeeds in having a glimpse of its vast spiritual treasure, and tries to give 'a reflection' of its soul. He is not dogmatic or partisan—his aim is only to make people reflect—and is guided by a liberal eclecticism in his choice of texts.

The Tantric Yoga is only one of the Sadhanas for the supreme identification of the soul with God, for 'the union of the human being with the divine dwelling with him'. Hindu doctrine recognizes ignorance and desire as the cause of suffering, and knowledge as the only means of escape. God, the ultimate refuge of man, is the cause of cosmic manifestation, and is regarded as an androgynous Unity. Purusha and Prakriti are the masculine and the feminine polarizations of the Absolute Brahma, 'the primordial undifferentiated Substance'. The Kundalini represents the female creative force, Sakti, and the book deals with the secret mechanism of releasing this power and canalizing it through the sushumna-nadi to the farthest reach of the Sahasrara. This is the secret of Asia.

The author wisely resists the temptation to be abstruse or recondite, and gives a brief but clear outline of the different methods of practice, breath-control, postures, and mental exercises. He succinctly describes the subtle anatomy of the human body with its envelopes, Nadis, and Chakras with their symbolic powers

and properties, and the method of awakening the 'coiled up' energy from its quiescent state and making it the instrument of liberation. He takes occasion to correct some of the common errors of Western writers in dealing with Yoga, and aptly utters a warning against the dangers of abusing spiritual power. He also glances at Tibatan, Chinese, and Japanese schools, which closely resemble the Indian systems, and finds an essential unity in the different techniques common to all Asia.

The book is well written and nicely printed, but a few words have been wrongly spelt in the index e.g. Arjana (-u-), Gange (-a-), Kroshna (-i-), Puruka (-a-), Rechakra (r to be deleted), and Yamima (-un-). This is rather inexcusable in a work which professes to give only precise information and, in so doing, has laid bare the mistakes of others in the field (*vide* footnote p. 57).

Philosophy of Love (Bhakti-Sutras of Devarishi Narada): Translated and explained by Hanuman Prasad Poddar. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakpur. Pages ix + 342. Price Re. 1.

Devotion to God is the easiest and safest path for the attainment of the highest human destiny. Pilgrims of this way of realization have a most exalted example in the life of the divine sage Sri Narada and the most telling and clear guide-book in his aphorisms, which deserve to be brought home to everyone by all possible means. Any number of editions and commentaries of these practical and authoritative *sutras* cannot be a superfluity. The edition before us is distinctive: the translation is accurate; explanations are based on sound authority; extracts from recognised texts on the cult of Devotion are adequate, if not profuse; and the language of the book is uniformly lucid. We unreservedly recommend the book to all religious aspirants.

Mysticism in the Upanishads:
By Bankey Behari. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakpur. Pages 2 + 120.

The mystic and the philosopher turn to the Upanishads for spiritual inspiration and intellectual stimulation. The latter build systems of thought and types of world-views on the foundation of pithy Upanishadic utterances while the former turn to the perennial fountain of Upanishadic wisdom for the attainment of God, Who is the Ultimate Truth. The Upanishads are being much studied now in the East and in the West. But these precious texts cannot yield their innermost treasure unless such study and investigation are undertaken with proper Sraddha and under spiritual discipline. We believe that the above book will in some measure help to foster such an attitude towards these much-revered scriptures. Freedom from pedantry and a practical tone make the book readable, even though the treatment is too brief and inadequate. One would have in the book more matter regarding the Upanishads on which it professes to base itself.

Songs From Bhartrihari: By Lal Gopal Mukerji, Kt., and Bankey Behari. Published by the Gita press, Gorakpur. Pages 16 + 55. Price Re. 0-8-0.

The name of Bhartrihari is a household word in India. His brilliant genius as a philosopher and grammarian of rare merits is knowledge of the erudite few only; but as a didactic and lyric poet he is very widely known. Few among the lettered in India are ignorant of a line or verse of his, especially from his hundred verses on Niti or 'Rule of good life'. In the above book a choicest selection of fifty-one verses is offered with a faithful translation. These selections are mostly from the *Vairagysataka*, and though the beautiful poetry may be enjoyed by all, they do not serve the man in the world as much as the *Nitisataka*. If the publishers have not the idea

of bringing out the *Nitisataka* in a similar form separately, it is a matter of wonder why an adequate number of verses from that group has not been represented in this selection. One could hardly find a more effective handbook of Indian etiquette, morals, polite behaviour, and rules of decorum than in the *Nitisataka*. The present book contains a monochrome illustration of the Samadhi of Bhartrihari.

The Story of Mira Bai: By Bankey Behari, B.Sc., L.L.B. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakpur. Pages 150. Price Re. 0-13-0.

Besides the life-story of this paragon of Divine Love, the above book gives thirty-two of her soul-stirring songs in the original along with the English rendering. Eight attractive and aptly chosen illustrations enhance the value of the book. It can form a suitable presentation to anyone inclined to the beauties of the religion of Love.

Sri Sarangapani Stava (Sanskrit): By Vidvan Kali Rangacharya. Published by A. Srinivasa Raghavan, M.A., Ambalapuram, Pudukkottah. Pages vii + 49. Price Re. 0-4-0.

In spite of neglect and positive discouragement Sanskrit still persists as a living language. Works are being produced even today in this immortal tongue in various provinces. The above devotional lyric in 244 stanzas is one such, coming as it does from a present-day devotee and scholar. The poem is composed with the purpose of praising Sri Sarangapani, an aspect of Vishnu worshipped for several centuries in the famous Temple of Kumbakonam, from the time of the great Alwars and Acharayas of the Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya. The verses are faultless, easy-flowing, attractive for the devotional strain, and worthy of reflection for the Visishtadvatic doctrines that are glanced at in them.

Spiritual Diary: By Swami Sivananda Sarasvati. Published by the Divine Life Society, Calcutta. Supplied freely out of the Donation given by Shree Balabux Singhania.

Virtue can be cultivated only by assiduous labour. If there is a passion for mending one's ways daily, a register of one's lapses is helpful to make one better and wiser. This spiritual Diary is serviceable to all to whom the idea is appealing. You are arraigned at the bar of your own conscience and interrogated. The reply and the course of future behaviour determine the development of your character. The twenty-seven questions posed here are not exhaustive; they are overlapping and, in some cases, pedagogic. The plan is laudable.

Srimadbhagavadgita: By Swami Sivananda Sarasvati. Published by the Divine Life Society, Rikhikesh; in six parts; distributed free.

The plan and motive of this publication is highly praiseworthy, but the editing and printing of it leave much to be desired.

Philosophy Made Easy: By Mr. M. L. Naganna, President, Divine Life Society, (Madras Branch) 289, Thambu Chetty Street, Madras. Price Re. 0-8-0.

This booklet contains excellent instructions on the practice of religion clothed in a homely style. We wish a wide circulation for it. The price seems to be a bit high in view of the ordinary get up and printing.

Svatmaprakasika (Sanskrit and Kannada): Edited by Y. Subbarao, Adhyatmaprakasa Karyalaya, Holenarasipur, Bangalore. Pages 37; Index; Glossary. Price Re. 0-3-0.

This important Advaitic text is attributed to Sri Sankara. We have in this brochure the text in Kannada script and a lucid and accurate translation into the same language.

Sri Mukapanchasati (Sanskrit): Translated into Tamil; original in Devanagari; an Introduction in English by Mm. Kuppuswami Sastri, M.A., I.E.S., Retd. Published by B. G. Paul & Co., Madras. Pages xv + 252. Index; Illustrated. Price Re. 1-0-0.

The above devotional lyric of five hundred mellifluous stanzas in a variety of attractive metres soaked in the highest filial devotion to the Mother of the Universe deserves to be better known in the North than it is at present. It has been a very popular cycle of hymns in South India for several centuries. This great religious poet, Sri-Muka-Kavi, was, according to South Indian tradition, one of the presiding occupants of the Sri Kamakotipitha, identified with Sri Mukarbhaka-Sankara. Probably he flourished in the latter part of the Sixth Century A. D. He was a congenital deaf-mute who subsequently regained his speech by the grace of Sri-Vidya-Ghana, his spiritual director. By the grace of Sri Kamakshi of Sri Kanchi he became the author of this immortal poem of rare merits. In charm of composition, vividness of description, choice of diction, richness of imagery, perfection in metre, devotional content, and philosophic suggestiveness, few poems of the class could rival this inspired production. The price is put sufficiently low so that even people whose mother-tongue is not Tamil may go in for this edition as it contains a valuable Introduction in English and a faultless text in Devanagari. We heartily recommend the book to all worshippers of the Divine Mother.

My Master (Burmese): Published by the Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon. Price Re. 0-4-0.

This is the first book of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature appearing in the Burmese language. 'My Master' is the title of Swami Vivekananda's famous lecture on his master delivered in America.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram (Charitable Hospital) Rangoon.

This report gives a vivid and exhaustive account of the premier medical Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission. One can easily see at a glance at this annual document that the Sevashram has been maintaining steady progress. Even the Government General Hospital has not such a large outdoor attendance. Certainly that is an index of its popularity. A rough idea of its proportions may be got from the following facts: It has provision for 200 beds in the Indoor Section and twenty-seven doctors (of whom seven are ladies), nineteen paid nurses and midwives, and ninety-two other workers engaged for various duties carry on its day-to-day service; it is equipped with surgical and medical sections with decent provision for treating Ophthalmic, Venereal, and Pulmonary Tubercular cases; it has a Dental and an X-Ray department added during the year under report; and it has also a new extension of the Maternity section made in the same period. The total number of cases treated during the year was 126,579, of which 6,681 were indoor cases and 119,898 outdoor. The daily average attendance at the outdoor section was 1,025 in 1940 as against 833 in the previous year, and the total indoor patients for the year were 6,681 as against 5,263 in the previous year. There had been 9,013 surgical cases, both principal and secondary inclusive, as against 7,178 in the previous year. A comparative study of the above figures will attest to the growing usefulness of the institution. And the death rate, which was 5 per cent., compares favourably with that of the other Hospitals of Burma.

The total income of the Hospital for the year, under different heads, was Rs. 88,501-12-6, and the expenditure, Rs. 83,095-0-3. Special mention may

be made of the donations of Rai Bahadur Virjee Doya, for the extension of the Maternity Section and of the generous contributions of the Burma Red Cross Society and the East Asiatic Company, Rangoon, towards the purchase of an X-Ray plant.

Although the Hospital is now in a flourishing condition, the increasing demands made on its services call for more accommodation and increasing financial support from the public and from the Government.

Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul, The Vilangans, Trichur.

The Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul is one of the few growing rural reconstruction centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. The distinguishing feature of this Centre is the uplift work amongst the so-called Untouchables of Kerala. Education on the Gurukula plan is the pivot of its activities. Education is imparted centering round rural arts and crafts so that the products of the institution may be economically productive members of society.

The Vidyamandir, the Gurukul, the Mathrimandir, and the Industrial School are the main departments of the institution. The Vidyamandir was raised to the status of a full-fledged High School in 1940. The Report placed before us describes its work in the course of 1939-'40. During the period the High School building was completed and was opened by Swami Madhavanandaji, the General Secretary of the Mission. The strength of the school was 385 of which 241 were boys and 144 were girls in 1939. There were 19 qualified teachers on the school staff in 1939, and 21 in the year 1940. Boys were sent up for the Government Examination of From III, and the results compare very favourably with those of the other schools of the State. The Gurukul and the Mathrimandir

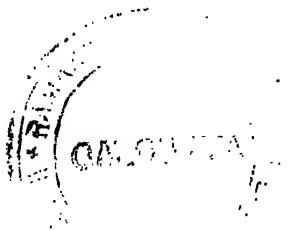
are the residential sections for the boys and girls respectively. During the period under report, the strength of the Gurukul was 40, and that of the Mathrimandir 13. The Industrial school is recognized and aided by the Government. The students are sent up for the Government Examinations. The strength of the school in 1939 was 19 and 21 in 1940.

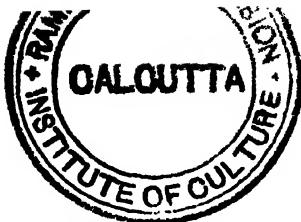
During the two years under review the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and other religious teachers were celebrated. In 1939 the occasion of the Anniversary celebration of the High School was availed of to organize a Rural and Industrial Exhibition in furtherance of the institution's rural reconstruction activities.

The income for the year 1939 was Rs. 18,482-8-2 and the expenses Rs. 12,707-7-8. The income for the year 1940 was Rs. 10,008-4-3 and the expenses Rs. 16,039-2-7, thus leaving a bank balance of Rs. 5-4-3. This reveals

the poor finances of the Gurukul. Although the Gurukul had been in existence for the last 14 years, it is still in its beginnings, and with the growth of its activities the need for more accommodation and funds has become imperative. A building of its own to house the Mathrimandir, quarters for the Gurukul occupants and workers, and equipments and medicines for the medical ward seem to be the first and foremost requirements of the institution. The opinions extracted from the Visitors' Book declare with one voice that the present usefulness of the Gurukul is surpassed only by its future potentialities. India needs more such institutions 'to stop', as Swami Vivekananda said, 'the holes in this National ship of ours'. It would be highly gratifying to all interested in the future of our nation if noble enterprises of this type are generously encouraged and supported by the public.

Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence, weakness and surrender to the impulses of the lower Nature; it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of Divine Truth. The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desires and lower movements or to one's ego or to some other Force of the ignorance and darkness that puts on a false appearance of the Divine.—*Sri Aurobindo.*





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VEDASARA-STOTRA

By Vanamali

The following hymn covers the verses from the thirty-eighth to the sixty-sixth of the fifth chapter of *Brahmasamhita*—a work which Sri Chaitanya got from the temple of Adikesava in Mallara in the South, and popularized in Bengal. Sri Chaitanya was much fascinated by this Vaishnava text and ordered his disciple Jivagosvami to write a commentary on it. The devout pupil did so with much care and erudition. In this Stotra the Supreme Being, Sachchidananda, is magnified as Govinda, and identified with other Divinities. In going through the hymn, it may be borne in mind that Goloka, identified with Svetadvipa in Vaishnava theology, is not a geographical territory. Dvipa means what is detached from Samsara, and it is spoken of as white only because of its divine purity. The second verse of the fifth chapter of *Brahmasamhita* definitely states that the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus, has the appellation Goloka. In religious books of this class the Sadhakas are advised to meditate on the Supreme Spirit in this visualized lotus. The apparently sensuous imagery found in some of the verses are only cryptic statements of spiritual realizations gained at various levels of Sadhana. Suggestive imagination plays a great part at the initial stages of spiritual practice, and they help to lift the mind out of its gross earthly settings. This charming hymn supplies a variety of them, and so ranges from a lower to a higher level of spiritual illumination. The translation appended is only tentative, as there are obscure points in the text which require elucidation in the light of new MSS and allied literature.

विन्तामणिप्रकरसश्चमु कल्पवृच्च-
 लचावृतेषु सुरभीरभिपालयन्तम् ।
 लक्ष्मीसहस्रशतसम्भ्रमसेव्यमानं
 गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

I adore Him, Govinda, the supreme source of all; Who tends the heavenly cows in regions bristling with 'wish-yielding gems' and overgrown by myriads of celestial trees; and Who is zealously served by a thousand Powers (Lakshmis) (1);

वेणु कण्नत्मरविन्ददलायताञ्च
 वर्हावतंसमसिताम्बुदसुन्दराम् ।
 कन्दर्पकोटिकमनीयविशेषशोभं
 गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who is playing upon His melodious flute; Whose long attractive eyes have the shape of the pericarp of a lotus; Who wears the diadem of peacock feathers; Whose graceful form has the hue of the rain-cloud; Who is transcendently charming, as if a million Cupids were rolled into one (2);

आलोलचन्द्रकलसद्वनमाल्यवंशी-
 रत्नाङ्गदं प्रणयकेलिकलाविलासम् ।
 श्यामं त्रिभङ्गललितं नियमप्रकाशं
 गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who dons on His neck a softly moving fresh garland, called Vanamala, into which are woven flashing eyes of peacock's feathers; Who wears armlets and a flute in the hands; Who is lively in the sports of affection; Whose colour is dark-blue, bodily pose is bent at three points, and lustre constant and uniform (3);

अङ्गनि यस्य सकलेन्द्रियवृत्तिमन्ति
 पश्यन्ति पन्ति कलयन्ति चिरं जगन्ति ।
 आनन्दचिन्मयसदुच्चलविग्रहस्य
 गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose limbs exercise for ever the functions of all faculties, overseeing, protecting, and urging on the movements of innumerable worlds; Whose eternally dazzling form is nothing but supreme felicity, pure intelligence, and timeless existence (4);

अद्वैतमच्युतमनादिमनन्तरूप-
 मायं पुराणपुरुषं नवयौवनं च ।
 वेदेषु दुर्लभमदुलभमात्मभक्तौ
 गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who is without a second, permanent, unoriginated, the origin of all manifestations, existing from ancient time as the one Person, unfading in youthfulness, and easily accessible to those who are devoted to Him, although hard of attainment by mere scriptural erudition (5);

पन्थास्तु कोटिशतवत्सरसम्प्रगम्यो
वायोरयापि मनसो मुनिपुण्डवानाम् ।
सोऽप्यस्ति यत्प्रपदसीम्यचिच्न्यतत्वे
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who is that indescribable Reality the path to Which is traversed even by wind perhaps only in a billion years, yet Who is so proximate to eminent sages like something at the border of the point of their feet (6);

एकोऽप्यसौ रचयितुं जगदण्डकोटि
यच्छक्तिरस्ति जगदण्डचया यदन्तः ।
अण्डान्तरस्थपरमाणुचयान्तरस्थं
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Though One, without a second to aid, Who has power to effect a million worlds; in Whom multitudes of worlds subsist; Who dwells in the heart of the unresolvable atoms that constitute the worlds (7);

यद्ग्रावभावितथियो मनुजास्तयैव
सम्प्राप्यरूपमहिमासनयानभूषाः ।
सूक्तैर्थमेवनिगमप्रथर्तैः स्तुवन्ति
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

By contemplation upon Whom men with thoughts soaked in such contemplation attain to His very form, glory, abode, and emblems, celebrating Him with far-famed Vedic hymns (8):

आनन्दचिन्मयरसप्रतिभाविताभि-
स्ताभि यं एव निजरूपतया कलाभिः ।
गोलोक एवनिवसत्यखिलात्मभूतो
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Having become the central being of all, Who dwells in Goloka itself in the company of His own Powers, that are but various parts, waiting upon Him recognizing Him to be supreme felicity and wisdom (9);

प्रगाञ्जनच्छुरितभक्तिविलोचनेन
सन्तः सदैव हृदयेष्ववलोकयन्ति ।
यं श्यामसुन्दरमचिन्त्यगुणस्वरूपं
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whom the pure and devout visualize constantly in their hearts as Syamasundara (the handsome dark-blue one) having attributes and powers beyond description, with the eye of devotion rendered effective by the application of the collyrium of wisdom (10);

रामादिमूर्तिषु कलानियमेन तिष्ठन्
नानावतारमकरोद् भुवनेषु किन्तु ।
कृष्णः स्वयं समभवत् परमः पुमाद् यो
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who has incarnated on earth in various forms, like Sri Rama and the rest, by limiting HImself to a part, but Who in His fulness has Himself become Krishna, the Supreme Male (11):

यस्य प्रभा प्रभवतो जगदण्डकोटि-
कोटिष्वदेशवसुधादिविभूतिभिन्नम् ।
तद्वाद् निष्ठकलमनन्तमशेषभूतं
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose true illumination is distinct from the attributes and manifestations of millions and millions of worlds with their terrestrial and other spheres; Who is the sole Ruler—that Brahman described as partless, infinite, all-comprehending (12);

माया हि यस्य जगदण्डशतानि सूते
त्रैगुण्यतद्विषयवेदवितायमाना ।
सत्त्वावलम्बिपरसत्त्वविशुद्धसत्त्वं
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose Power, possessing the three modes of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, and described in the scriptures (which fall within the realm of these triple modes) as Maya, brings forth hundreds of worlds; Who is Being absolutely pure, transcending the Sattva tinged with Rajas and Tamas (13);

आनन्दचिन्मयरसात्मतया मनःसु
यः प्राणिनां प्रतिफलं स्मरतामुपेत्वा ।
लीलायितेन भुवनानि जयत्यजस्वं
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Being of the essence of Joy and Intelligence, Who approaches the minds of creatures as the reward of remembrance, and wins over the worlds for ever by His sports (14);

गोलोकनान्नि निजधान्नि तले च तस्य
देवीमदेशहरिधामसु तेषु तेषु ।
ते प्रभावनिचया विहिताश्च येन
गोविन्दमादिषुरुषं तमहं भंजामि ॥

Who has ordained His manifold glory in his own abode called Goloka and below that in the respective spheres of His consort Lakshmi, Mahesa, and Hari (15);

सृष्टिस्थितिप्रलयसाधनशक्तिरेका
क्षयेव यस्य भुवनानि विभर्ति दुर्गा ।
इष्टानुरूपमपि यस्य च चेष्टते सा
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose single Power, Durga, is instrumental in the continuation of cyclic worlds, originating, sustaining, and dissolving them, and moves like a shadow at His will (16);

श्रीराद् यथा दधि विकारविशेषयोगात्
सज्जायते नहि ततः पृथगस्ति हेतोः ।
यः शम्भुतामपि तथा समुपैतिकार्यात्
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who by His inscrutable power has become Sambhu also for His own purpose, without subjecting Himself to change, quite unlike the milk which turns into curds when mixed with some acid only by losing its original state (17);

शीपाच्चिरेव हि दशान्तरमभ्युपेत्य
दीपायते विवृतहेतुसमानधर्मो ।
यः तादगेव चरिष्णुतया विभाति
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who appears as the moving and becoming universe just as a flame that begets another flame revealing exactly the very same qualities as those of the original when lit on to another wick (18);

यः कारणार्णवजले भजति स्म योग
निद्रामनन्तजगदण्डसरोमकूपः ।
आधारशक्तिमवलम्ब्य परां स्वमूर्ति
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who enjoyed sleep in the waters of the Causal Ocean, with his own self-sustaining power to recline over, and with the infinite worlds assuming the form of the pores of His skin (19);

यस्यैकनिःश्वसितकालमथावलम्ब्य
जीवन्ति लोभविलजा जगदण्डनाथाः ।
विष्णुर्महान् स इह यस्य कलाविशेषो
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose single breath is the life-time of the Brahmans and Vishnus, who are but His parts presiding over the innumerable worlds that spring up from His hair-holes (20);

भास्त्रान् यथाश्मसक्लेषु निजेषु तेजः
स्तीयं कियत् प्रकटयत्यपि तद्वद्व
ब्रह्मा य एष जगदण्डविधानकर्ता
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who has partially empowered the Demiurge Brahma, who has created the worlds with all their furniture, even as the sun who confers upon the sun-crystal his own powers to a certain extent (21);

यत्पादयश्वयुगं विनिधाय कुम्भ
द्वन्द्वेषणामसमये स गणाधिराजः ।
विश्वान् निहन्तुमलमस्य जगत्यस्य
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Invoking Whose tender feet in a holy vessel at the time of worship and obeisance, the celebrated Mahesa has been able to ward off the obstacles of all the worlds (22);

अभिर्मही गगनमम्बु महद्विशश्च
कालस्तयात्मनसीति जगत्त्रयाणि ।
यस्माद् भवन्ति विभवन्ति विशन्ति यं च
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

From Whom is sprung fire, earth, ether, water, air, the quarters, time, Atman, mind, and the triple worlds constituted of these; and in Whom they subsist and into Whom they dissolve (23);

यष्ट्युरेष सविता सकलग्रहाणां
राजा समस्तसुरमूर्तिरशेषेजाः ।
यस्याज्ञया भ्रमति सम्भृतकालचक्रो
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Whose eye is yonder sun, the prince of all planets, the embodiment of all brilliance and all deities, and the commandant at whose behest the cycle of Time that draws together the units like days and months rolls on (24);

धर्मोऽथ पापनिच्यः श्रुतयस्तपासि
ब्रह्मादिकीटपतगावध्ययश्च जीवाः ।
इत्तमात्रविभवप्रकटप्रभावा
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

By whose gift of power alone all things are rendered possible and efficient—virtues and vices, scriptural erudition and religious austerities, and creatures from Brahman down to flies (25);

यस्त्वन्दगोपमथवेन्द्रमहो स्वकर्म-
बन्धानुरूपफलभाजनमातनोति ।
कर्माणि निर्दहति किन्तु च भक्तिभाजां
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

Who metes out results of deeds to all according to their merits whether king of heaven-borns or a firefly; but Who annihilates the Karma of the devotees (26);

यं क्रोधकामसहजप्रणादिभीति-
वात्सल्यमोहगौरवसेव्यभावैः ।
सञ्चिन्त्य यस्य सदर्शी तनुमापुरेते
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥

And by constantly thinking upon Whom either through anger or love, or friendship and the rest, or terror, or fondness, or stupefaction, or reverence as due to a parent or teacher, or accepting the attitude of a servant, these (Kamsa, Gopis, Arjuna, etc.) have attained appropriate births—I adore Him, Govinda, the source of all (27);

श्रियः कान्तः कान्तः परमपुरुषः कल्पतरवो
हुमा भूमिः विन्तामर्णगणमयी तोयमपृतम् ।
कथा गानं नाच्यं गमनमपि वंशी प्रियसक्षी
चिदानन्दं ज्योतिः परमपि तदास्वाद्यमपि च ॥

In that region of His, the multitude of Powers are the beloved; the Supreme Being is the lover; the wish-fulfilling trees are the garden trees; the earth is made of heavenly gems that leave no further wish; waters are of immortality; narrations, songs, and dances are supplied by the celestial music issuing from the Lord's beloved flute; the one luminary and the one object of enjoyment is the Light of Knowledge and Bliss (28);

स यत्र चीराङ्गिः स्वति सुरभिभ्यश्च सुमहान्
निमेषार्धार्थ्यो वा व्रजति न हि यत्वापिसमयः ।
भजे श्वेतद्वीपं तमहमिह गोलोकमिति यं
विदन्तस्ते सन्तः चित्तिविरलचाराः कृतिपये ॥

There, the vast ocean of milk flows for heavenly cows to drink; there time has no sway, not even half a second; I adore that White Island which is designated by some who know it as Goloka—the few blessed souls that are to be found on this earth (29).

A MESSAGE¹
By Swami Ramadas

BELOVED FRIENDS,

You have gathered together to celebrate the birthday of a star of the first magnitude and of rare brilliance in the spiritual firmament of India and the world. This very thought should fill your hearts with exaltation and joy. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is a world-renowned divine personality. To say anything to glorify him is just like holding a candle to the sun. Still, out of deep reverence, love, and adoration for him we have to pay our homage on this auspicious occasion at his holy feet. He came to awaken the world to the consciousness of God. He brought to the heart of every one in India and the world a message of hope, peace, and liberation. He dispelled the narrow and misinterpreted notions about the different religions prevailing in the world, and taught how in their unity they lead struggling humanity to the one transcendental goal—God. In his life-time, by his spiritual splendour, he transformed the hearts of thousands and granted them the vision of the Supreme. It is through these illumined souls that he broadcasted his message to the world. He moulded a dynamic personality like Swami Vivekananda. The names of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda are so intimately linked together that we cannot think of the one without the other. Blessed is humanity that these two Avatars appeared on the earth to inspire and guide mankind on the path of eternal light, love and peace.

What was the predominant trait that endeared and still endears Sri Ramakrishna to his disciples, devotees, and admirers? It is his childlike and joyful nature. He is so pure, innocent and glorious. To meditate on him is to become like him, a divine child full of radiance and bliss. His teachings are so simple and so easy to grasp as the words of a child, but they contain the highest wisdom. His parables have become universally popular. Through them he infuses into the hearts of devotees and aspirants a true knowledge of the Divine and a true guidance to reach Him.

What a wonderful power his name weilds? In his name even this day millions are materially and spiritually benefited all over the world. We are dazzled by his spiritual grandeur.

Ramdas has placed the above humble tribute at his holy feet as the continued remembrance of him makes his heart too full for further expression. May Sri Ramakrishna's blessings be ever pouring on you all. May he dwell in your hearts and enlighten them with the know-

¹ Given at the birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

ledge, love, and light of the Supreme Godhead. Verily, you are all the manifestations of the one universal God. All victory to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa !

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

By Ghanshamdas Rattanmal Malkani

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I

RELIGION and philosophy are often supposed to have different standpoints. Religion is concerned with faith, and philosophy with reason. There is some truth in this contention. But at the same time, they are not unrelated. There is an inner unity of purpose between the two. They have a common goal. They merely seek to realize it in different ways.

Religion starts with faith. There is such a thing for it as the word of God revealed to man. But what reveals God? It is not any common individual experience. The word of God reveals God. Thus God is supposed in a sense to reveal Himself to us. But for this self-revelation, we should not know Him. We should only know Nature and our fellow-beings. There would be no object of religious faith and religious experience.

God may reveal Himself through the word. But this does not amount to any actual knowledge of God. Knowledge has a certain *necessity* about it. It is not a subjective necessity. It is a necessity imposed by the object of knowledge or the reality which is known. I cannot but accept reality as it is in itself. It does not depend upon me what I should perceive. I am not free in the matter. There is no scope for faith where real

knowledge is concerned. I do not merely *believe*, I *know*. Knowledge carries its own necessity and its own certitude,—necessity from the side of reality and certitude with reference to the knowing subject. If one could know God in this sense, faith would be annulled. The mystery surrounding the object of faith would have gone. There would be no religious experience in the ordinary sense. Because we know, we cannot make feeling our guide.

Knowledge may wipe out religious experience as commonly understood. But what, if we have no knowledge? Shall religious experience remain? If we do not know God, is it not wholly arbitrary to believe in Him, to swear by Him, and to guide all our actions by the word supposed to be revealed by Him? Is not religion a set of prohibitions and injunctions imposed by man on himself, without any warrant in the nature of things themselves? As religious men, we may reserve our judgment on these questions and think the issue not very urgent. We may even persuade ourselves to believe that whatever the ultimate justification for our faith, religion is justified by its results. It has pragmatic value. It makes for personal happiness and social peace and well-being. There is no doubt some truth in this way of thinking.

But it is not a correct analysis of religious experience itself. Once we make it clear to ourselves that this is the only justification of religious faith and religious feeling, these would of themselves evaporate. Religious experience would be annulled. The religious man believes in a God Who *exists*. He sees His signs everywhere in Nature, and His guidance in all his life. God is not a fiction of his imagination, but a reality. Once however he is made conscious of the so-called real foundations of his faith and made to believe that the only justification for his faith is the pragmatic value that ensues therefrom, he has no use for religion. He does not want to persist in a mode of self-deception. He believes that religion gives him guidance *in the understanding of the ultimate nature of things*. It is not a subjective illusion. It is then *part* of religious experience that the object of faith and of feeling should be something real, something transcendent, and something that is the ground of things known and visible. If we throw doubt on this faith, we cut religious experience at its roots.

How we come to have a religion is a question difficult to answer. There is nothing in the objective situations with which we are confronted to make belief in God necessary. The revealed word of God itself does not bind us if we do not want to be bound by it. For, after all, we must believe in a God, before we can attribute any word or speech to Him and feel bound by the same. The origin of religion does not lie in anything that we can objectively know. Its real origin is in the nature of man. Man is born with a religion. Nobody can thrust it upon him. Society does not

make him religious. It merely offers him a form under which his own innate religious feeling may express itself. Religion is not *made* by man. It is *found* by him. It is nothing if it is not ancient and eternal. The essence of religion is subjective, inborn, and common to all mankind. It is the same everywhere. There is difference only in expression; and the expression is determined by the historical circumstances of the social group in which one is born. It is not therefore wrong to say that the original religion of mankind is one and the same. The differences are man-made.

However one may come to have a religion, religious experience itself is self-complete. It does not want any outside support or a support from our cognitions. It is its own justification. Nothing that we can produce as fact or as argument can undermine it. It is beyond cognitive truth and cognitive falsity. This does not mean that it offers no problem to cognition. But it is not disproved by any cognitions that we have. We are not therefore distressed if we have no intuition of God as we have intuition of objects in general. We do not seek God that way. In fact, if anything offered itself under the sensuous form merely as such, we should repudiate it. It would not be an object of faith and of religious feeling to us. The sensuous form may be a symbol, but it cannot be the thing itself or the God whom we worship. While therefore the object of religious experience is not any object of our ordinary cognition, it is still something which we believe to be real. This belief offers a problem.

Belief is a form of cognitive experience. It has reference to what is

supposed to exist. I believe in the existent, the real. Belief is a cognition which is unfulfilled, and demands to be fulfilled. Belief is not a feeling. It is an intellectual attitude to things. The reason for this attitude may be found in feeling; but it is not itself feeling. It is the response of thought to feeling. But if that is the case, cognition is not wholly absent. It is merely unfulfilled. Thus cognition and the problems of cognition cannot be ruled out as irrelevant to religious experience. Only those problems cannot be solved within the limits of the experience in question; for that experience is predominantly a feeling.

II

Philosophy seeks to reach an ultimate explanation of things, cognitively given. It tackles problems of cognition, and the nature of reality as can be determined in cognition. Even in this, its special sphere, it differs from science. Science too studies the nature of reality. Its problems are intellectual. But they are very specific and limited in scope. They arise from an empirical interest,—how things happen or why they happen as they do? To answer these questions, we must undertake an empirical investigation of things. We simply do not ask questions which cannot be thus answered. But the interest of philosophy in the explanation of things is not empirical. It questions the very truth of empiricity. Does cognitive experience, as assumed by science, conform to the best standard of truth? Thus philosophy undertakes a criticism of scientific knowledge itself. It seeks to go beyond science to a mode of knowing reality which will be free from the

defects inherent in scientific knowledge. Science does not criticize itself as a way of truth. Perhaps it is conscious of its own abstract method and the provisional character of the truths which it reaches. But it is too dogmatic to allow that it can be corrected, or that there can be any other and a higher mode of approach to the real. Philosophy attempts this; and to that extent, it is truly a science of sciences or the ultimate science.

However that may be, philosophy is different from science. It tackles problems of an ultimate and non-empirical character: (a) When is knowledge true to reality? This involves a criticism of ordinary knowledge, and an indication of a form of knowing which will be free from error. (b) What is reality in itself or ultimate reality? This involves the distinction of reality from erroneous and illusory appearance in general. The two questions are inter-related. The aim of both is to get at the Absolute Truth.

III

The questions of philosophy are sublime, if they can be legitimately asked. But can they be legitimately asked and answered? It has, for example, been held that philosophy cannot properly be concerned with any knowledge of reality. Knowledge of reality belongs to the province of science. Science studies reality, as reality can be studied. When we talk of reality or of ultimate reality, we forget that the term "reality" does not stand for a substantive. It is an adjective only. We say, A is real, B is real, etc. Further, this adjective is not existential as when we say, "the flower is

blue". Here "blue" has existential import. The flower that exists has the empirical quality of "blueness". All existential adjectives are empirical qualities of things. This is not the case with the adjective "real". We do not perceive the quality "real" to belong to anything. "Real" is a value-adjective. In order to say that something is real, we must have a criterion of reality. We have simply to determine this criterion. There is no further *problem* about reality. Reality is not to be known in some special way or through a process of philosophical reasoning. Reality is simply no substantive to be known. It is not therefore a legitimate aim of philosophy to know reality, as though there was some special way of doing this. The scientist knows reality in the only way it is possible to know it. The philosopher has no new way of knowing open to him. He can only decide about the criterion—or when we call a thing real and when we call it unreal. Here he will have to be guided by the common sense of mankind as expressed in the use of these adjectives. The criterion-problem is thus essentially a verbal problem. It has reference to the use of terms "real" and "unreal". There is nothing essentially new in the method of knowledge open to the philosopher.

This reasoning is not correct. "Real" is not a value-adjective. A value-adjective has a necessary reference to subjective appreciation. We say, "this is beautiful to me," "this is good to me," etc. When we say that something is real, we intend no subjective appreciation of the thing. We intend the existence of the thing by itself and in itself. It is not value that we want to affirm, we

affirm the self-existence of the thing. This self-existence cannot be an adjective, much less a value-adjective.

An adjective is what qualifies a thing, and distinguishes it from other things. It is only when a thing already exists that there is scope for distinguishing marks. Existence itself cannot distinguish. For what is it to distinguish from? It can only distinguish from the unreal. But the unreal is nothing at all. It is not something having the character of unreality. Only real things can have characters, and only real things can be qualified or distinguished one from another. Further, if "real" is an adjective, it must *add* something to the thing it qualifies. But then the thing without the adjective "real" will be wholly non-existent. We are reduced to the absurd position that a thing which is non-existent and unreal becomes real when it is qualified by a certain adjective. In point of fact, it is the adjective that depends for its reality upon the thing, and not the thing upon the adjective. An adjective has no self-existence. It is the thing that primarily exists, and the adjective exists only through it.

An adjective distinguishes one real thing from another. But since the adjective "real" does not add any information to a thing, it cannot distinguish. It says nothing *about* the thing. And lastly, an adjective is a certain property which a thing has and which we can know the thing to possess. But no amount of inspection of a thing can ever bring to our knowledge the property called "real". All the properties of a thing are empirical characteristics of it. "Real" is not such a character. It is not like "red" and "round". And so it is called a value-adjective. But

we have seen that this is not true. The terms "real" and "unreal" have the form of adjectives, but they are not adjectives.

We have a philosophical problem about reality which is not merely a problem of criterion. We have not merely to decide when to call a thing real and when to call it unreal, but also what actually is real. The problem of criterion cannot be separated from the problem of its application in our experience. We must answer the question: What kind of things are real? This is not a verbal question. It is not merely how we *use* the terms "real" and "unreal" in daily life. That may be a simple enough matter. A thing involving self-contradiction, (*e.g.*, the son of a barren woman), a thing which is purely imaginary, (*e.g.*, a centaur), and a thing which is illusory (*e.g.*, the rope-snake), are all declared unreal. On the other hand, things which are actually perceived and not contradicted by any evidence in our hands, are declared to be real. There is no difference here between the common man and the philosopher. The philosopher cannot go against common sense and coin his own meanings. But notwithstanding this, there is a further problem which the common man does not see but which the philosopher sees. And that is the logical problem,—is there any real difference, in the last analysis, between the things that are thus determined to be real and the things that are thus determined to be unreal? What is unreal to the common man is unreal also to the philosopher. But the same agreement does not obtain with respect to things which the common man regards as real. The common man's criterion of

reality, *viz.*, "being normally perceived" or "being known through the ordinary means of knowledge", is not acceptable to the philosopher. It is good for practical purposes, but logically it is not free from defect. Things which are accepted as real by the common man offer a problem to him. He does not accept the view that things which are uncontradicted so far are on that account absolutely real. They may become unreal at any time for the common man himself. For one perception can, in his own experience, cancel another. To the philosopher, such things are already unreal. For if they did not have a structure or a form of being in our experience similar to that of the unreal things, we should not so much as think it possible for them to be proved unreal at a later stage. That they are liable to be so proved shows that, notwithstanding their present reality to us, this reality is not incompatible with their strict and ultimate unreality. They have the structure of the unreal. They are logically *like* those things which appeared to be real at one time but which later proved to be unreal. They are as good as illusory. We can in this connection bring in our experience of dreams, where things which are merely *imagined* appear to exist. We can analyse our normal sense-experience itself and show that the object as sensibly *given*; vanishing and indeterminate; and that what we actually know of the object is what we *construct* in thought or in imagination. This logical consideration of things can be carried in all directions. Thus the common-sense view of the matter is full of contradictions and inconsistencies to the philosopher. He

seeks to get to the truth by criticizing and rejecting it. He is not concerned with the verbal question of the usage of certain terms like "real" and "unreal". He is concerned with the live question of what is "reality *par excellence* or ultimate reality." His problem is one of actual knowledge, and not one of lingual usage.

IV

We said that the interest of philosophy is a cognitive interest. Philosophy answers certain ultimate questions. They do not arise at the scientific level. Starting with science, we are not likely to go beyond it. We shall at best need a philosophy which has for its problem the defining of the presuppositions of science. To seek to go beyond scientific knowledge to a reality which is transcendent and super-sensible and which is the ultimate ground of the known and the visible world is not a scientific aim. It is religion that accepts this kind of reality on faith, and passes it on to philosophy as a problem.

Philosophy has often played the second fiddle to science or to religion. But then it has degraded itself. It has a function different from both. It is inspired by religion and its ideals, but its chief interest is cognitive like that of science. It is to know reality. The interests of science and of religion are often conflicting. Science has a practical interest in the intellectual understanding of the visible things of the world. Religion is opposed to this interest and substitutes for it a higher interest. But it does this merely on the basis of feeling. Feeling is naturally blind, although

it is nearer to the heart of things in a certain sense than intellect. It is the business of philosophy to liquidate this feeling and replace it by knowledge.

There are not two kinds of knowledge, one scientific and the other philosophical. If scientific knowledge were knowledge of reality, if it fully realized the ideal of knowledge, there would be no room for another kind of knowledge, called philosophical knowledge. It is because the former fails to realize the ideal of knowledge that the latter becomes possible. There can be only one kind of knowledge of reality. Philosophy seeks to elucidate this. It condemns scientific knowledge as no knowledge.

The method of philosophy has thus two strands in it. One is that of faith. It is faith that sets us a problem of the knowledge of ultimate reality. We believe in the super-sensible ground of the world, but we do not know it. Religion itself, under the name of theology, often seeks to justify faith through some kind of second-hand reasoning. But this justification does not go very far. The vitality of religion consists in the non-intellectual immediate feeling. The intellectual interest is secondary for it. Since however man's make-up is complex, he cannot silence his thought, and he seeks some intellectual support for his faith. But these intellectual arguments, offered by theology, are within the frame-work of religious faith. This faith is not to be questioned. Philosophy on the other hand, does not stop with faith; it merely starts with it. It seeks to transform faith into knowledge. It is in this sense the truer and the higher form of religion.

The other strand is that of reason. Philosophical truth can only be seen with the aid of reason. Whatever may be the ultimate nature of reality, we certainly do not know it either at the scientific or at the religious level. Its knowledge has yet to be obtained. And it can only be obtained within the limits of our present experience. What is needed therefore is an analysis and an interpretation of this experience. This is the work of reason. We proceed, through criticism and correction of erroneous beliefs, to truth or the kind of intuition which

is true to reality. It is in this handling of our own experience through reason that philosophy differentiates itself from religion, and has an appeal to men of science and to others to whom ordinary religious feeling is incomprehensible and even unwelcome.

Philosophy in this way composes the differences of thought and feeling, and reconciles religion and science. It is not antagonistic to either. It merely goes to their foundations, and gives an ultimate satisfaction to the human mind which neither of them is capable of giving by itself.

SANCTITY

'Sanctity is the orientation of the spirit towards supreme Reality. To the believer in any theistic religion, no attitude of the soul could be simpler, more natural than this. There is nothing about it which deserves to be called abnormal, archaic, or fantastic. The complications with which it is surrounded, the unnatural aspect which it wears for practical men, all come from its collision with the entangled interests and perverse ideals of the world. Thus, retreat from this tangle of sham interests, the building up of a consistent universe within which the self can develop its highest powers and purest loves, is felt to be imperative for those selves in whom this innate aptitude for God reaches the conscious level. In these spirits, the 'vocation' for the special life of correspondence with the super-sensual reproduces on a higher plane the vocation of the artist or the poet. All the self's best energies and desires tend in this direction and it will achieve harmonious development only by unifying itself about this centre of interest, and submitting to the nurture and discipline which shall assure its dominance. The symbols with which the universe of religion is furnished, the moral law which there obtains, are all contributory to the one end; and find their justification in its achievement.'

—*Evelyn Underhill.*



WHEN SCHOOLS ARE MEANT FOR INDIVIDUAL PUPILS

By Dr. G. S. Krishnayya, M.A., Ph.D.

THE problem of academic adjustment to individual ability has received little attention in India. Almost all available resources seem to get so completely exhausted on the mere maintenance of schooling facilities, that the catering to individual differences is considered financially and therefore practically impossible. It is a matter for regret that even the existence of such variation has not been sufficiently realized by Indian school men. What wonder then that attempts to meet individual needs even under traditional conditions are few and far between!

IN THE CLASS-ROOM

In the day-to-day planning of instruction there are valuable opportunities for giving special attention to pupil's needs. In the coaching of failing pupils, in the enriching of the work of bright pupils who are not given special promotion, in the care for the make-up work demanded for pupils given double promotion, and in the making up of deficiencies in previous training, a keen teacher is bound to respond to the individual needs of his pupils. The type of adjustment needed can be discovered through the frequent use of diagnostic tests and the experience of the teacher with the pupils.

In every school there are pupils who are head and shoulders above their classmates in the ordinary school work. Hitherto they have received scanty attention. This negligence is a. educational crime. Unusual proficiency should be met with the omission of some units of

subject-matter and perhaps also of certain subjects, certainly all but the new aspects of subjects assigned, may well be omitted. Only the minimum amount of drill or study should be assigned and minimum amount of time should be allowed when abler pupils have only to meet standards set for average pupils. On the other hand many additions are conceivable. The number and variety of applications of principles involved should be increased. Activities and subjects outside the regular curriculum may be introduced. Enrichment of the bright pupils' school programme may take the form of adding new material in the ordinary subjects. Further, there is always the opportunity of adjustment that comes from more rapid promotion.

At the other end of the scale, in every school there are pupils who are unable to cope with the ordinary school work. The customary treatment accorded to them has been a failure or, what it really amounts to, the absence of any treatment. The cause of failure of any pupil should be explained in terms of the failure of the school in properly placing the individual, in terms of the teacher's instruction, or in terms of the failure of a pupil to do his best. If it is the school's fault, the course of the pupil should be altered. If it is the teacher's fault, he should take steps to improve his instruction, or to find work where his failures will be of less consequence to others. If it is the pupil's fault, he should be made a case for special attention and

clinical investigation. The omission of certain subjects may be part of the adjustment.

Adjustment in class-room procedure is demanded by various factors. In order to meet the problem of low ability, or retardation, the assignment of extra drill, making simpler assignments, and setting less extensive standards for mastery may well be tried. Whenever possible, the development of a markedly different curriculum is to be recommended. The psychological law to be kept in mind is that able pupils need less drill material and dull pupils more to reach a given standard of achievement.

The correction of deficiencies in school subjects is a more or less common class-room procedure. This make-up work may be due to skipping a class. Failure or absence also will necessitate make-up work and even extra drill. Sometimes deficiencies in tool subjects, training in which is no longer provided in the curriculum, may necessitate such extra attention. Assignments can sometimes be set in such a manner as to correct deficiencies. Repeating or failure as a method of adjustment would seem to be justified when a pupil is unable to master the fundamentals of the succeeding grade, and also when promotion would mean the losing of something highly valuable, which could not be secured in a higher class.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

The Indian school gives little or no attention to social adjustments. In this it is not alone. The average home rarely provides any special training. Very often the training that children get is of the most deplorable kind.

In order to meet this situation activities should be assigned to correct deficiencies in home training or social background, and in social habits and attitudes. Attention should be paid also to lack of development in character, attitude towards work, and working habits. In order to raise the standard of appreciation in the field of art, and literature, the assignment of certain activities or subjects may be recommended. The fact is that we are altogether too prone to think of the subject-matter of education exclusively in terms of certain bodies of knowledge to be taught to children. But subject-matter in truth originates within the experience of the group meeting-needs that are real to that group. The values of life which every age and every nation have sought to perpetuate and to pass on to the next generation, include such more than specific bodies of fact. They include skills, habits, ideals and virtues. There is decided advantage in thinking of these also as belonging to the curriculum of the school, for they are then much more likely to get the attention they deserve. No curriculum can be considered really adequate which does not include all classes of virtues, the attainment of which makes better men and women. Unless these are considered part of the subject-matter of education, responsibility for their inculcation will sit very lightly upon the conscience of the staff of the school.

Physical defects and health needs cannot be overlooked with impunity. There is more truth than poetry in the statement that our Universities turn out educated invalids. Increasingly men are waking up to the

significance of that pregnant, time-honoured copy-book maxim, *mens sana in corpore sano*. Through the co-operation of the home and the community and periodical medical inspection much can be done. Special attention and skilled supervision alone can adequately meet this need.

VOCATIONAL NEEDS

The adjustments mentioned above are not all equally applicable to any given grade. Some of them are of value in the elementary school, others in the high school. There are many which can profitably be employed anywhere in the eleven classes. But the question of vocational needs includes only the last few years. There are many pupils who will have to leave school early on account of economic pressure. Supplementary vocational education in the early stages and, later on, specific training have been tried with success in some western countries. The emphasis on academic subjects may be lessened, if they are predominantly preparatory for levels higher than those which the individual pupil expects

to reach. Over-aged pupils should be given a slightly different course because of the unlikelihood of their going to college later on. Pupils who expect to enter college should be prepared with the demands of the University in view. A comprehensive high school is the only kind of school which can meet the needs of the times and provide the necessary adjustments. Differentiation and specialization are the demands of the day.

THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Doubtless, a great many problems will always remain teachers' problems. In spite of the valuable contributions that may be expected from scientific experimentation, there is little hope that any plan will automatically meet the entire range of individual needs. It will always be important for teachers to obtain some grasp of the whole task of individual adjustment that faces the school. The purpose of the article is to show the direction in which teachers can look for aid, and to assist them in the task of appraising any suggested programme for meeting individual differences.

Silence is always good; but I do not mean by quietness of mind entire silence. I mean a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to open to the Force that will change the nature. The important thing is to get rid of the habit of the invasion of troubling thoughts, wrong feelings, confusion of ideas, unhappy movements. These disturb the nature and cloud it and make it difficult for the Force to work; when the mind is quiet and at peace, the Force can work more easily. It should be possible to see things that have to be changed in you without being upset or depressed; the change is the more easily done.—*Sri Aurobindo.*

THE MISSION OF VEDANTA

By Swami Ashokananda

Do the students of Vedanta realize that they have a great responsibility on their shoulders? None can deny that humanity is just now passing through a period of great storm and stress, when every ideal is being remodelled, old ideas are being challenged and accustomed ways of doing things are being questioned. Economically, politically, culturally, spiritually, in every respect, the human mind and affairs are undergoing great changes. We are finding that every aspect of life has to be conceived in terms of the entire humanity. Take the economic problem itself. It is being increasingly realized that if the people of the world are to escape trade depression and unemployment, the economic system of each nation has to be adjusted in reference to the needs of the other nations. In fact, there has to be one interrelated economic system throughout the world. Similarly of culture. Every national culture has to be modified in relation to the cultures existing among the other nations of the world. We can no longer remain self-contained and self-sufficient. Every nation has to learn from and teach the other nations, and there is no doubt that the intermingling of cultures that is going on so rapidly at the present time, will eventually lead to a universal culture in which the whole of mankind will participate. Religion too is aiming at that universality. The future is surely going to reveal a universal religion of which the different creeds will be parts. This universality is going to

be the keynote of the future mankind. And men's honest efforts at the present time should be to actualize this much-desired future as early as possible. For, on this depends the peace and prosperity and the spiritual welfare of mankind.

But prejudice dies hard. We are too timid. We are loath to give up our mental narrownesses. When the rising sun is calling us into the open to bathe in its golden rays, we are still moping in the dark corners of our hovels. This is the tragedy. We are afraid of the new things that are happening and are going to happen. But, of course, we *have* to change and remodel ourselves after the future ideals. And herein lies the great responsibility of the Vedanta students.

Vedanta stands, above all, for universality, oneness, synthesis, harmony, infinite affirmation. Vedanta is a philosophy and religion of infinite hope. It promises infinite glory to men. It invites men to march forward from one achievement to another, till the very highest is attained. It stands for the unity of mankind. All true students of Vedanta have to feel and realize this fact. They have, above all, to be all-inclusive and harmonious. By their life, they have to prove to the timid world the beauty of the new ideals towards which humanity is reaching. They have to lay the foundation of the new being. They have to demonstrate to others that these new ideals are infinitely more helpful than the older credal and

sectarian ideals. Do they feel that they are the forerunners of the new age? Those who feel so, will surely prove a valuable asset to humanity. None may know of them, they may be looked upon as ordinary; yet the high potency of their thought and life will bring about revolutionary changes in the mental plane of humanity and will eventually set forces in motion which will greatly alter also the outer life.

The challenge of Vedanta is tremendous. The weak may shrink from it, but those who have any strength in them will take it up and rise to the required heights. It is of these that Jesus said that they were the salt of the earth. Let the best (and *everyone* has got the best in him or her) in us come out, let the Divine in us shine forth! Let the light in us be a beacon to the blundering world!

The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If I have to go about the world the whole day to make a living, it is hard for me to attain to anything very high in this life. Perhaps in another life I shall be born under more propitious circumstances. But if I am earnest enough, these very circumstances will change even in this birth. Was there anything you did not get which you really wanted? It could not be. For it is the want that creates the body. It is the light that has bored the holes, as it were, in your head, called the eyes. If the light had not existed you would have had no eyes. It is sound that has made the ears. The object of perception existed first, before you made the organ. In a few hundred thousand years, or earlier, we may have other organs to perceive electricity and other things. There is no desire for a peaceful mind. Desire will not come unless there is something outside to fulfil it. The outside something just bores a hole in the body, as it were, and tries to get into the mind. So, when the desire shall arise to have a peaceful, quiet life, where everything shall be propitious for the development of the mind, that shall come, —you may take that as my experience. It may come in thousands of lives, but it must come. Hold on to that, the desire. You cannot have the strong desire if its object was not outside for you already. Of course, you must understand, there is a difference between desire and desire. The master said, 'My child, if you desire after God, God shall come to you.' The disciple did not understand his master fully. One day both went to bathe in a river, and the master said, 'Plunge in', and the boy did so. In a moment the master was upon him, holding him down. He would not let the boy come up. When the boy struggled and was exhausted, he let him go. 'Yes, my child, how did you feel then?' 'Oh, the desire for a breath of air!' 'Do you have that kind of desire for God?' 'No, Sir.' 'Have that kind of desire for God and you shall have God.'—*Swami Vivekananda*.

THE UPANISHADS
By P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.,
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I

IN the words of a learned professor of English Literature the Upanishads are the Himalayan peaks of Hindu religious thought. Just as that great mountain range determines the climate, the rainfall, and the physical features of this peninsula, so do these heights of wisdom determine the scope and the quality of the spiritual life of the races that inhabit it. In point of popularity the Upanishads are second only to the *Bhagavadgita* among the Hindu scriptures. It has been translated into a number of European and Indian languages.

Many a European scholar has regarded the Upanishads as the acme of philosophical thought. Schopenhauer, the great pessimist philosopher, held the view that from every sentence of the Upanishads, deep, original, and sublime thoughts arise, and that they are pervaded by a high and holy spirit of earnestness. He concedes that in the whole world of thought there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads, and that it is destined sooner or later to become the fai'th of the whole world. Max Muller records his estimate as follows: 'They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains, so simple, and so true if once understood.'

The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas. Hence they are referred to as the Vedanta.¹

¹ The Upanishads stand at the end of the Vedas. The term *end* here means not only completion but fulfilment of the Vedic teaching.

They are the foundations of all the systems of Indian philosophy. 'There is no important form of Hindu thought, heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upanishads. The different schools of Vedanta have included the Upanishads as one of the triple texts that serve as the scriptural authority for their respective systems. All the Acharyas have commented on the ten important Upanishads.² The two prominent schools of Vedanta have very nearly exhibited an almost pathetic anxiety to find support for the doctrines of their respective schools in the Upanishads.' The message of the Upanishads is not without its lesson to the modern world, largely governed by the lust for dominions and brute force. The sages of the Upanishads have proclaimed for all times that 'he who sees variety and not unity wanders on from death to death.' (*Katha Upanishad*, IV: 10).

The term Upanishad has been interpreted in a number of ways. It means, according to Sankara, that which destroys ignorance and leads to Brahman. Some have interpreted the term as secret doctrine (*rahasya*). Others have rendered the term as 'sitting near the preceptor to receive spiritual instruction.' The Upanishadic seers who experienced the spiritual truths imparted to their disciples the method of attaining

² Ramanuja has not commented on all the ten Upanishads like Sankara and Madhva. In his *Vedantha-Samgraha* he has commented on select passages.

those truths, after testing their moral eligibility and earnestness.

The method adopted by the Upanishadic seers to impart the knowledge of the Spirit is not the logical or the barren dialectic method. With the help of powerful images and through the technique of informal dialogues they conveyed the truths felt on their pulse to their disciples. The Upanishads are full of significant parables and attractive dialogues. The poetic value of the Upanishads consist in their suggestiveness. Suggestiveness is the soul of poetry. The poetry of the Upanishads has charmed many a noble soul. The seers were half-poetical and half philosophical in their approach to Reality. Rabindranath Tagore has laid proper stress on the poetic beauty and the lilt of Sanskrit poetry in general and that of the Upanishads in particular. He has assessed their worth with judicious insight. The Upanishadic expression is 'the poetic testament of a people's reaction to the wonder and awe of existence.' The wonder and the poetry of the Vedic hymns is deepened and widened by the calm of meditation in the Upanishads.

The *upasana*, i.e., meditation, enjoined by the Upanishads is not the external ceremonial worship of the various gods conducted by the worlding. Nor is it an exercise in abstraction. It is a definite technique which is calculated to transform the good into the very object he worships. *Upasana* leads to that 'shattering experience wherein the individual withdraws his soul from all outward events, gathers himself together inwardly, and strives with concentration, when, there breaks upon him an experience, secret,

strange and wondrous, which quickens within him, lays hold on him and becomes his very being.' It is at this stage that the aspirant forgets the otherness of God and feels that he is not a banished stranger from God. He cries aloud 'I am Brahman' (*aham brahmasmi*). The two stages of *upasana* are: (1) concentration and (2) sympathetic imagination. In the first process the mind is entirely abstracted from everything but the object of meditation. In the second stage, union with the object is experienced through sympathetic imagination. It is the core of the mystic experience. It is this experience that is at the heart of every religion. The experience resulting through intense *upasana* is the mystic experience of the seers of the Upanishads.³

Besides the doctrine of *upasana*, the end envisaged by the Upanishadic seers is different from that of early Vedic hymns. They offered sacrifices to the several gods with the definite hope to gain reward in return in this life as well as in the hereafter. They sometimes desired *svarga* (Heaven) and at other times they desired to become the ruler of Heaven, Indra. These rewards, however pleasant they may be, belong to the realm of the perishable. There is return from these pleasures as soon as the merits acquired by the individual are used up. The stamp of mortality is deeply set on them. This ideal is termed *abhyudaya* (welfare). This, no doubt, is indistinguishable from Utilitarianism. The Upanishadic seers do not seek *abhyudaya* as the chief end. They are

³ Prof. Hiriyanna's translation of the *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, Vani Vilas Press Edition.

not the slaves of utility. They desire abiding peace, from which there is no return to worldly pleasures. They desire *moksha* which puts an end to the cycle of birth and death. They are not lured by heavenly joys or earthly possessions. Their view is to attain the highest.

The Upanishadic concept of man is entirely different from the scientific one. Man, according to the Upanishadic seers is not a compound of a few pounds of carbon, some lime, a little phosphorus, some sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, and a handful of mixed salts all scattered and combined. The mentioned ingredients constitute the physical organism of man. It is wrong to identify the essential and the abiding in man with these things. Hence the Upanishads are up against Materialism. They warn the aspirant not to mistakenly identify the body (*deha*) with the Soul (Atman). Neither is man body plus mind, i.e., the intellect. The intellect, according to the Upanishads, is not something entirely different qualitatively. Mind also, even as the body, decay with time and belong to the physical world. The intellect or *manas* is an internal sense organ, a compound of the five Elements. Hence the essential in man is not to be identified with *manas*. Man is essentially the imperishable Soul whose intrinsic characteristic is knowledge and bliss. This essential character is lost sight of, and on account of earthly attachments the soul is blind to its true nature. So man revels in the perishable pleasures.

II

According to the theistic interpretation of the Upanishads, the soul

comes to have the experience of its true nature through the infinite grace of the Lord, Who removes the veil that covers and conceals the true nature of the self. It is with the grace of the Lord that the Soul can come into its own. The order of merit is as follows: 'Superior to the senses are indeed the objects; and superior to the objects is the mind. Even superior to the mind is the intellect and superior to the intellect is the *purusha* (person). Superior to the *purusha* (God) there is nothing. That is the goal, that the supreme destination' (*Kathopanishad*, II: 10, 11). The theistic interpreters of the Upanishads have made out that a supra-personal God is the ultimate Reality. God is equated with Brahman. He is referred to as the abode of an infinite number of auspicious attributes. The Upanishads speak of him as 'Truth, Knowledge, Infinite.' He is described as the creator of the world of forms and names. 'That, verily from which these beings are born, that by which the beings live, that into which when departing, they enter, seek to know that, i.e., Brahman' (*Taittiriyopanishad*, III: 1). He is the efficient cause of the world and not its material cause. He never becomes the world of objects and suffers change. Such a transformation of God into a world of things would not be different from the pantheist's position. God is immanent as well as transcendent. He does not suffer any deformation in the discharge of his cosmic functions. He is the inner ruler immortal of all souls and things in the world.

He is the *antaryamin*. There are a number of passages that describe the omnipotence and the glory of the Lord. 'By the Lord is

encompassed all this whatever changing there is in this world' (*Isavasyopanishad*, 1). The Lord is referred to in the *Kenopanishad* as 'that which is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech, indeed, of the speech, the breath of the breath, the eye of the eye. . . .' All the Vedas declare that God is their prime purport. 'The word which all the Vedas declare, that which all penances proclaim, and desiring which people lead an austere life, that word I tell thee in brief: it is (God)' (*Kathopanishad*). The immanence of the Lord is described as follows: 'Subtler than the subtle, grosser than the gross, the Lord is conceived in the cave of the heart of the man. . . .' (*Kathopanishad*).

The Upanishads insist on the fact that the Lord is the chief Reality. 'The eternal among the eternals, the intelligent among the intelligent beings, the one among the many, he who grants desires. . .' (*Kathopanishad*). The theistic interpreters point out that the individual soul, in order to attain *moksha*, must necessarily acquire the grace, i.e., *kripa* of the Lord. Salvation is not an intrinsic merit of the soul. It is derivative and has to be attained through man's contemplation of God and God's approach to the devotee through his infinite grace. The Upanishads speak of the Lord's grace as the chief factor contributory to *moksha*. 'Not through much learning is the Atman reached, not through the intellect, or the sacred teaching. It is reached by the chosen of Him. To his chosen the Atman reveals His Glory' (*Kathopanishad*). The moment the aspirant has the immediate vision of the Lord, the scales fall from his

eyes and he realizes the intrinsic nature of his soul, i.e., bliss. This is *moksha* according to the theistic tradition. With the vision of Brahman, the Upanishad says, 'the knot of the heart is cut; all doubts are dispelled . . .' (*Mundakopanishad*). We should not lose sight of the fact that the theists do not identify the released soul with God. There is a creatureliness which is a permanent characteristic of the Soul. The released soul is not subject to suffering and sorrow, but he is in no sense the equal of the Lord. Powers of creation, sustentation, and dissolution are denied to the released Soul.

The world of names and forms is absolutely real to the theist. Moral strife is a serious problem. The good is that which pleases God. The Indian theist admits the reality of the world in order to preserve the glory and greatness of God. If the universe be regarded as relatively real or illusory, it militates against the glory of the Lord. It is to maintain the omnipotence of God that the theists admit the absolute reality of the world.

III

Side by side with the theistic interpretation of the Upanishads, there is the mighty tradition, i.e., the Absolutist interpretation of Sri Sankara. This school of thought goes by the name of Advaita. Sri Sankara, in his commentaries on the Upanishads elaborates this view. The Upanishads easily lend themselves to this view also. There are certain aphoristic statements in the Upanishads which are in favour of the Monistic view. Some are of opinion that the terse aphoristic statements alone should be considered

as revealed scriptures.⁴ These aphoristic sayings identify the supreme Reality with the individual selves. Brahman is equated with Atman. The identity of the individual soul with Brahman is asserted as the central purport of the Upanishads. The aphoristic statements are called the *mahavakyas*. They are: *aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman); *tat-tvamasi* (That thou art); *ayamatma Brahma* (This Soul is Brahman); *Sarvam khalv idam Brahma* (all this is Brahman).

Reality, according to the absolutist view of the Upanishads, is consciousness, knowledge, bliss, and infinitude. There is nothing beside the central reality, and from this hypothesis it follows that Brahman cannot be characterised in terms of anything other than Itself. Hence it is declared as self-luminous. The Upanishads declare: 'Nor there does the sun shine, nor the moon and the stars; nor do these lightnings shine. Whence, then, this light? Him alone, as he shines, does everything else shine after. By his lustre do all this shine distinctly.' Any description of Brahman is logically unintelligible because there is nothing outside it which can be predicated about it. With this fact in view Sankara comments the passages that describe Brahman in an identical sense. He interprets them in the light of the appositional construction. Brahman does not possess consciousness, Brahman is not knowledge, nor is Brahman blissful. Brahman is consciousness, Brahman is knowledge, Brahman is bliss. The difficulty in resorting to positive description of

Brahman has driven the Upanishadic seers to describe Him in negative terms, i.e., *neti neti* (not this not that) known among mystics as the *via negativa*. The negative definition can tell us what Brahman is not. Further, all human knowledge express itself in terms of relations and through the help of mediation. Without a knower, a known object, and a relation between them there is no knowledge. Brahman cannot be the object of such a knowledge because there is nothing besides Him. Hence the Upanishads describe Him as follows: 'Words and mind go to Him not, and return. But he who knows the joy of Brahman fears no more' (*Taittiriyanpanishad*). 'Not indeed by speech, nor by mind, nor by the eye is it to be reached. How can it be seen by any other than one who says, "it is"' (*Kathopanishad*). Sometimes the Upanishads describe the Brahman in paradoxical terms. 'It moves and it moves not, it is far and near, it is inside of all this; and it is outside of all this' (*Isavasyopanishad*). 'Other than the known, verily it is and also above the unknown; thus we have from the ancients who have discriminated it for us. What cannot be expressed through speech and whereby speech is expressed, that alone know ye as Brahman; not this which people worship.' 'What one cannot contemplate with the mind, and whereby they say the mind is contemplated, that alone know ye as Brahman, not this which people worship' (*Kenopanishad*).

From the above description of Brahman it follows that though a positive description of It is not possible, still Its existence is said to be the ground and goal of all human

⁴ Vide Prof. Hiriyanna: *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 50, 51.

life. The mere fact that Brahman is unknowable is no argument for Its non-existence. A host of critics have charged Sankara's interpretation of the Upanishads as leading to Nihilism, a variety of Buddhism. Such a charge is hardly fair to Sankara. In the words of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the negative definitions of Brahman refer to the distance between time and eternity, appearance and Reality. Though the nature of the Supreme is unknowable in terms of intellectual categories, yet It can be realized by effort and discipline. Brahman realization is not the result of any act. It is not derivative as the theist's *moksha*. Brahman realization is intrinsic. It is like coming into one's own soul; it is like the remembering of a fact which we have forgotten. In the words of a learned Advaitin, Vidyaranya, it is like the finding of a forgotten golden ornament which is all the time worn round the neck. The individual soul is not the same as the empirical ego *jiva*. The *jivas*, the plurality of selves, are held by the Upanishads as the illusory manifestations of Brahman.

According to the theistic interpretation of the Upanishads, God is said to create the universe with the help of Matter or Prakriti, *i.e.*, the material cause of the universe. God is the efficient cause of the universe. The creation of the universe by God is to be conceived on the analogy of the carpenter who works on a piece of wood. A particular variety of theism propounded by Ramanuja, holds the view that the whole world of Reality, is the attribute of the Lord. Hence, a transformation (*parinama*) of the Lord. The Lord does not lose his entire self in the

world of creation. He is immanent as well as transcendent. In marked contrast to these theories the Absolutist interprets the Upanishads in a different light. They hold the view that all that exists need not be real. The real is changeless and there is nothing besides. The perceptual fact of the presence of a world of plurality has to be somehow accounted. The Upanishads, according to the Absolutist, treat the entire world of plurality as an illusory manifestation of Brahman. This is explained on the basis of the famous analogy of Vedanta, *i.e.*, illusory perception of a snake in the place of a rope. In the twilight we mistake a piece of rope for a snake and sometimes tremble at it. As soon as a light is brought, our illusion disappears and we have the true knowledge. Likewise, the world of plurality is superimposed on Brahman and is withdrawn at the moment of Brahman realization. Hence the Upanishadic prayer, 'from delusion, darkness, and death lead me to truth, light, and eternal life' (*Brihadaranyakopanishad*).

The one real appearing as many has been the oldest problem in philosophy. Some have laid great emphasis on the unity aspect at the sacrifice of the manifold. Others have stressed the many to the exclusion of the one. The Indian theists have asserted that the many are real and are under the supreme power of the Lord, without Whose grace and will not a sparrow 'shall fall on the ground'. The relation between the one and the many is the relation between the director and the directed. The Lord is represented as the indweller of the entire world of Souls. Hence there is no necessity

to treat the many as illusory or as possessing a reality less than that of God.

The advaitic interpretation of the Upanishads, as represented by traditional thinkers, explains the many as the illusory manifestations of the one. The one has not *become* the many. The one appears as the many. Just as the individual who mistakes the rope to be the snake, in darkness, so do men mistake the one Brahman as being many. Sankara holds the view that on account of the fundamental positive delusion which has no beginning we perceive the different individuals and not the one Brahman. The fundamental delusion is called *Maya*. This potency called *Maya* has two powers. It suppresses the Real and shows up in its place the many. According to the Absolutist the individual soul is Brahman but conditioned by *Maya*. The world of plurality is the resulting perception due to the functioning of *Maya*. The removal of *Maya* is *moksha*. The moment this fundamental ignorance which shows up the many in the place of the one ceases, the individual becomes Brahman. The attitude of such a released soul is described by the Upanishads: 'And he who uniformly sees all beings even in his self and his own self in all beings does not feel repelled therefrom. Where to one who knows, all beings are verily identical with one's own self, there what delusion and what sorrow can be to him who has seen the identity?' (*Isavasyo-upanishad*).

It is this realization that is spoken of as Brahman realization. It is in this sense that we should understand some of the Upanishadic passages, for example, 'He who knows

Brahman becomes Brahman.' 'By knowing that one you know all.' 'There is no difference here.' The illusory nature of the plurality of things is described very vividly in the Upanishads. In the sixth chapter of the *Chandogyopanishad*, the seer Uddalaka gives instruction to his son Svetaketu, 'My dear son, as by one clod of clay, all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only a name, arising from speech, but the truth being that all is clay; and by one nugget of gold all that is made of gold is known, the difference being only a name, arising from speech, but the truth being that all is gold.' After this, the venerable father, with nine apt examples, illustrated the truth that the individual soul is no other than Brahman. The separatist feeling is due to the delusion which gives rise to the knowledge of difference. The central fact of the delusion is the reciprocal erroneous identification of the not-self with the self and the self with the not-self.

The Absolutist explains the ordinary affections that bind men to their kith and kin as due to the presence of the Atman in them. In the famous dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, this is brought out clearly. Yajnavalkya says to his wife, 'Verily, my dear, it is not for the love of the husband that the husband is dear; but it is for the love of the Atman that he is dear. It is not for the love of the wife that the wife is dear, but it is for the love of the Atman that she is dear; it is not for the love of the son that the son is dear, but for the love of the Atman that he is dear. Verily, my dear, all things are dear to us, not as in themselves they are, but it is for the love

of the Atman that they are dear' (*Brihadaranyakopanishad*). With these words, he exhorts her to contemplate and realize the Brahman. This aspect of the Upanishadic teaching is emphasised by the Absolutist. At the end of his tour in India, Dr. Deussen, said to a gathering at Bombay, 'The *Gospels* quite correctly establish as the highest law of morality, the dictum, "love your neighbour as yourselves".' But why do I do so? Because by order of nature I feel pain and pleasure only in myself, not in my neighbour. The answer for it, Deussen held is given by the Upanishads: The neighbour is no other than my own self. All of us are Atmans.

As against the Absolutists, there is a complaint that Brahman realization means the sacrifice of personality. This is lamented as a great loss. The truth is that there is no loss of personality. What is mistakenly identified with the full blown personality is only the limited petty self. In the words of St. Teresa, the silk worm has died and has become the beautiful butterfly. It is not death but resurrection. In the words of the Christian mystic, the union with God is described as follows: 'It is like water falling from heaven into a river or fountain, where all becomes one water, and it is not possible to divide or separate the water of the river from that which fell from heaven; or, when a little stream enters the sea so that henceforth there shall be no means of separation.' This description finds its echo in many an Upanishadic passage.

IV

The method of attaining Brahman realization is a little different from

the method of the theists who attain salvation by the grace of the Lord. The absolutist interpreters of the Upanishads suggest that knowledge and not grace or the mere performance of disinterested service that leads man on to Brahman realization. On the intellectual side, the aspirant is asked to study devoutly the sacred scriptures under a guru, preceptor. The insistence on the necessity of going to a guru is brought out by a significant passage in the Upanishads. 'He that has a teacher knows' (*Chandogyopanishad*). Mere *sravana*, i.e., hearing from the preceptor, is not enough. It has to be supplemented by *manana*, i.e., continued reflection with a view to arrive at a definite conviction. There is a third stage which enables one to realize Brahman, i.e., the integral experience that affirms his theoretical knowledge. This is called *nididhyasana*, i.e., meditation which results in realization.

The aspirant, before embarking on the study of the scriptures with a view to attain real knowledge which consequently ensures *moksha*, has to purify himself from all taints. Hence the necessity for moral training. Moral training consists chiefly in the performance of scripture-ordained duties with the spirit of the scripture in view. The cultivation of cardinal virtues is essential for moral life. In the words of Sankara the purpose of moral life is the cleansing of the heart, *sattvasuddhi*. First of all, the Upanishads ask men to differentiate the pleasant from the good. 'The good is one thing, the pleasant another; and he that wishes to live the life of the spirit must leave the sensual life far behind' (*Kathopanishad*). This would mean that

the aspirant is exhorted to employ every one of the sense organs in the service of the Spirit. The Upanishads stand for an introspective outlook. 'The Creator forced the senses outward. Hence one sees the outward and not the inner self; someone that is wise desiring immortality sees the inner self by turning the eyes inward' (*Kathopanishad*).

The foundation of religious life must be laid on two principles: (a) the cultivation of detachment, (*vairagya*) and (b) the acquisition of knowledge. The term detachment must be understood in the plenary sense and not in the formal. The term detachment has a negative flavour about it which is highly misleading. It is negative only in name. It entails the practice of all virtues. It is not giving up of actions and social duties as such. It preaches an ethics of self-renunciation and not world-renunciation. It is not an ethics of world negation as Dr. Schweitzer and Professor Heiler point out. It is not the *mere* donning the yellow robes or a matter of shaving the head. Nor is it a flight to the ivory tower. It is not escaping from social duties because of helplessness. The Upanishads, while they exhorted renunciation, never failed to lay due stress on the ethics of social duty.

The idea that *sannyasa* is the fourth stage in the scheme of life is not of Upanishadic origin. *Sannyasa* is not a stage at all. It is not an *asrama* like that of the householder or the anchorite. It is the transcendence of all the *asramas* of life. It is an end in itself and not a means to Brahman realization. The formal idea that *sannyasa* is a fourth stage is a later innovation born out of the institutional phase of religion. Renunciation

means not world renunciation but self-renunciation. It insists on the performance of duties without a sense of egoity or the utilitarian drive. It is *phala-sannyasa* and not *karma sannyasa*.

The practice of detachment in this positive sense is pictured well in the Upanishads. 'Two birds, ever united companions, cling to the self-same tree. Of these two, one eats the sweet berry, the other looks on without eating' (*Mundakopanishad*). The one is the Brahman and the other is the empirical ego. It is with the help of detachment that the necessary poise for the mind is attained. With such a frame of mind it is easy to acquire the *jnana* that gives us Brahman realization. *Jnana* is not mere intellectual discernment. It is not mediated knowledge. It is an integral experience. It shatters the delusion of separation. The worship of the *Isvara* helps us to transcend the delusion and have Brahman realization. Hence it is asserted that God has a place in Advaita. The Brahman experience is a self-certain and self-certifying knowledge. The seers in the Upanishads describe more an experience than teach a doctrine.

Modern professors of Vedanta have deviated in their interpretation of the Upanishads a little from tradition. Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and others have found the necessity to explain the relation between Brahman and a phenomenal world in clear terms. The traditional interpretation that the world of plurality is cancelled and sublated after Brahman realization is not favourable to the commonsense view which cannot understand how a

world of plurality can commit suicide. Hence it is held that the world of plurality is somehow *sublimated* and *transformed* into the nature of Brahman. It is *sublimation and not sublation that results from Brahman realization.*

Further, the attainment of Brahman realization need not be through *jnana* alone. Traditional Vedantins have needlessly exaggerated the importance of *jnana* as the means to realization. *Karma* and *Bhakti* are as important and as efficient methods as *jnana*, in helping us to realize Brahman. All the flower buds do not give rise to the same flower. Uniformity is no unity. Men grow to their best in different ways.

[Editor's Note: It is not possible to assert conclusively, as the writer does in the fourth paragraph from

the end, that *sannyasa* as the fourth stage of life is alien to Upanishadic thought. Of course, in a spiritual sense *sannyasa* is the transcendence of all *asramas* and all empirical experience at that. That does not, however, warrant us to believe that *sannyasa* in the formal sense, as accepted by Sri Sankara and others, was utterly unknown to the Upanishads. Passages such as *Chandogya*, II: 2.3.1, *Ibid*, V: 10.1, *Mundaka*, I: 2.11, *Brihadaranyaka*, IV: 4.22, *Jabala*, 4, *Mundaka*, III: 2.6, *Narayana*, XII: 3, *Kaivalya*, 3, and others may be considered along with their traditional interpretation, before such a categorical assertion is accepted. The verb *Pravraj* and the substantive *Nyasa* occurring in two of the important passages referred to above cannot be ignored even by a critical scholar who has no deference to tradition.]

For that, I say, work is necessary. What is the use of sitting quietly and saying: God exists? If you merely sit on the shore of a lake and say, 'There are fish in this lake', will you catch any? Go and get the things necessary for fishing, get a rod and line and bait and throw some lure in the water. Then from the deep water the fish will rise and come nearer, and you will be able to see and catch them. You wish me to show you God while you sit quietly by, without making the least effort. How unreasonable! You would have me set the curds, churn the butter, and hold it before your mouths! You ask me to catch the fish and place it in your hands. How unreasonable! If a man desires to see the King in his palace, he will have to go to the palace and pass through all the gates; but if he after entering the outermost gate exclaims 'Where is the King?' he will not find him. He must go through the seven gates, then he will see the King.— Sri Ramakrishna.

FEARLESSNESS BRINGS HAPPINESS

By Lokasaranga

CALCUTTA

HAPPINESS is impossible as long as there is cause for fear. But fearlessness is not the sole condition of happiness. A deluded, insensitive man may be apparently fearless. He may do courageous deeds. Often foolhardiness appears under the mask of bravery. But rashness cannot secure happiness for anyone; it plunges one into deeper misery. The seeming boldness of an unthinking man is no index of happiness present or prospective.

There are degrees of fearlessness, of courage. The instinct of fear is not very powerful or vivid in the baby. Physical and mental growth brings more fears. The organism, as it develops, becomes more and more aware of its surroundings as well as its needs. The boy of ten is surrounded by several fears. He peoples the dark space with spooks and spirits. He resorts to tears as his only weapon in times of fear. To the grown-up man nocturnal gloom is not a realm inhabited by adversaries, visible or invisible. His foes are within and also in the social environment.

Primitive man was ever on the alert to combat malignant powers that encompassed him. He devised weapons to ward off the dangers from beasts and birds. He invoked the aid of magic to propitiate or to vanquish unseen enemies. Modern man, on the other hand, asserts his sway over the denizens of air, earth, and water with the help of science. In the world of the up-to-date scientist demons and spirits simply do not exist. Scientific man fears

none—this is the claim. But has the scientist and his devout followers outgrown the fears of individual and social childhood?

Our crudest fears are rooted in our physical nature. The economic man dreads privation. The cultured man is anxious for good repute. A good name is the best asset that paves the way to prosperity. High social status is a powerful economic bulwark. But to the majority of men that eminence is but a hope. The ordinary man stirs himself to keep the wolf from the door. Hunger and cold disconcert all creatures. Man is no exception. Ninety per cent of human effort is directed towards self-maintenance. Social disturbances are mostly the outcome of obstructions on this path. Problems of society are more complex today than they used to be. One of the reasons for that is that science has made ancient luxuries modern necessities. Silk and perfumes, glass-ware and furnished vehicles, were the delight of mediaeval rulers. They come under the needs of a far larger number of people now. Developed sensibilities have multiplied needs. Scientific intelligence has supplied them unstintingly. Our needs have increased in arithmetical, and our fears in geometrical, progression.

Modern man has canalized all mental and physical energies to the external world. He has forgotten the claims of the inner man. In days of calamity for him there is no reserve within to fall back upon. Hence the fears of the civilized

citizens are numerous and appalling. Of all of them economic fear marks the top of the scale. Days of peace are spent in preparation for war. In the savage world powerful individuals and tribes were notorious for their rapacity. Today the greed of one State puts another on its nerves. At times like the present war spreads devastation everywhere. All are filled with alarm and stupefied. Men in many countries cannot follow peaceful pursuits with full security. Civil occupations are disturbed by military preoccupations. Scientific discoveries, economic inventions, increased luxury, disquieting fears, and racial destruction follow like links in a chain. No wonder, even the hope of happiness has disappeared, from the minds of most persons.

Both fear and anger issue from thwarted desires. Desires are multiplied at the risk of peace. Pure water quenches natural thirst. Even drugs cannot allay artificial craving for alcoholic beverage. Many of our artificial desires have no affinity with our natural needs. A craze for possession is something of an unnatural craving.

The idle rich take more nourishment than they can assimilate. They indent more viands than is required. Sheer love of possession or natural envy spurs them on to accumulate more than what they can make use of. To them possessions are no trust. The destitute millions are kept out of count when these cannot be manipulated as material for supplying their needs. Accumulation never ensures peace. Manure and wealth when accumulated, stink; when spread, give plentiful harvest. Fear and torment are the lot of the kite making off with a piece of flesh;

it is chased by other birds. But if it drops the bit in its mouth all its anxiety comes to an end. It does not require much scrutiny to see that craving for possessions is the cause of fear. Fear banishes happiness entirely.

At best one can get in this life only a mixture of pleasure and pain. Things are made so by Nature. Even the cleverest cannot have an unending spell of joy. Deluded minds vainly strive for perpetual pleasure. Some wrongly think that possession would give happiness. Every attempt to possess more is to stress the ego. Ego is a very complex phenomenon. There is a certain sharpness in it. It makes divisions where they do not, and need not, exist. The stronger the sense of the ego, the sharper the division between the individual and the group. Ego-sense is enlarged and strengthened by feelings and sentiments developed by the play of the ego in the sense-field. Some people are full of themselves. They sharply divide themselves from others. Where there is such separation fear is inevitable.

Pleasure is the quest of the inferior man. Only the intelligent work for enduring happiness. They discover true happiness at last, within; in owning as trust things without the sense of possessing. Pleasure deludes. Happiness gives calm. It is, and must be, certified by the intellect. There is no happiness without thoughtfulness. Thoughtless men live in a fool's paradise. Reflection tends to attenuate the ego, wipe out sharp divisions, and demolish separating barriers. Pronounced egoism, dividing existence and emphasizing individual possession, is

like a thick mist, and veils the truth. The benign rays of true knowledge alone can dispel it. Only then does fear cease. Where fear ends, there happiness begins. Ego instinctively urges one to accumulate; and accumulated possession entraps the ego into the net of pleasures. Enslaved ego sees only divisions, and longs only privileges. It never feels the nobility of obligation. Feelings of

separation and division stress the ego, suppress group sense, and create a state of perpetual fear. True fearlessness and genuine happiness result when the assertive ego wears out. So the seed of happiness evidently lies in fearlessness. The root of fear is in egoism. And egoism has its antidote in the feeling of oneness with all and sameness of vision in all nature, sentient and insentient.

ART AND RELIGION

By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

Art and Religion sum up all that is best, truest, and most beautiful in life. Although apparently their functions seem to differ, ultimately they serve one purpose, present one ideal. They are the tributaries of one and the same mighty river finally pouring their water into the ocean of eternity. While an artist, be he a painter, a sculptor, a musician, a dancer, or an architect, makes us appreciate beauty in its noblest form, a religious man, be he a saint, a philosopher, or a Rishi, makes us realize what is true and sublime in life. While art is the reproduction of nature that appeals to intuition and intellect, religion makes us realize that we are part and parcel of one Whole—a fact which is embodied in the formula *Tat Tvam Asi*. When a sculptor hews down a crude stone and gives it a definite shape, he expresses his innermost feelings. Likewise when a Paramahamsa expounds a terse formula or a condensed *Sutra*, he rouses in us feelings of sublimity. Who has not stood before a Buddhist Stupa or Asoka's Pillar, before a

magnificent temple, or a church, or a dignified synagogue, or a stately mosque and not felt inspired and not become 'in tune with infinity'? Music from time immemorial has been an accompaniment to many religious ceremonies. Rhythmic movements that express themselves in religious dances fill a devotee with emotional ecstasy. Indian saints in mediaeval ages made full use of the close relationship existing between art and religion. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa ecstatic dances, musical chantings, and melodious songs were so common that one feels that art is an accompaniment, nay a handmaid, of religion. In the Bhakti cult of Lord Gauranga, Santa Tukaram, and Sadhu Kabir, Hari Kathas or solemn Bhajans played a prominent part. Shall we take a leaf out of the lives of those devotees and put into practice their methods in the work of mass uplift? Perhaps the speed and bustle of modern times give little or no room for the proper appreciation of art even to the literate, much less to the indigent and the illiterate. Let us not be

unmindful of the fact that the world is full of art and the human soul full of emotions. Real art can vivify, rouse, and energize these emotions, and put them to some useful purpose. Not even the most irreconcilable of the puritans can deny that higher and nobler forms of sympathy and love are definitely aided by art. Our ancestors spoke of the close connexion existing between Kalas, Vidyas, and Dharma. Fourteen Vidyas and sixty-four Kalas were to be studied because each one of them was an aid to the acquisition of Sreyas as well as Preyas. Care, however, is to be taken to see that they do not degenerate into low sentiments. Kalas lead to aesthetic achievement ending in human happiness, while Vidyas lead to intellectual progress leading to bliss or Ananda.

History bears ample testimony to the fact that the advance of a parti-

cular type of culture coincided with the progress of art. The glories of the reign of Asoka, Shahjahan, Krishnadevaraya, or the Chola and the Pandya Kings were enshrined in their architecture. The blending of the Indian and the Saracenic architecture was one phase of the existing unity of the fundamentals of Hinduism and Mohammedanism. This pragmatic aspect need not be lost sight of by the builders of modern cities and towns. Those who feel that a blend will deprive the art of its individuality seem to take a parochial view. Art and religion in their higher forms know not the bounds or the limitations of colour, caste, or creed. Each is a complement of the other. A rational approach to this study is desirable. A synthesis of various cultures will thereby be considerably facilitated.

The first step is a quiet mind—silence is a further step, but quietude must be there; and by a quiet mind I mean a mental consciousness within which sees thoughts arrive to it and move about but does not itself feel that it is thinking or identifying itself with the thoughts or call them its own. Thoughts, mental movements, may pass through it as wayfarers appear and pass from elsewhere through a silent country—the quiet mind observes them or does not care to observe them, but, in either case, does not become active or lose its quietude. Silence is more than quietude; it can be gained by banishing thought altogether from the inner mind keeping it voiceless or quiet outside; but more easily it is established by a descent from above—one feels it coming down, entering or occupying or surrounding the personal consciousness which then tends to merge itself in the vast impersonal silence.—*Sri Aurobindo.*

SRI MADHVACHARYA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

By Swami Prabhavananda

SRI MADHVA, founded the Vaishnavite sect known as Sadvaishnavism.

He was born in the year 1199 A.D., of Brahmin parents, in the village of Beligram, near the modern town of Udupi, in the West Coast. He was sent to the village school, but proved himself to be more an athlete than a scholar. Physically strong and swift, he defeated his playmates in running, in jumping, in swimming, and in other athletic feats. But he left school at an early age and continued his studies of the sacred scriptures at home alone. In later years he revealed his knowledge of these scriptures, the Puranas, and logic.

During this early period of study at home, he was seized with the spirit of renunciation, and at the age of twenty-five he took the vows of a monk and pursued his studies of Vedanta under the guidance of a teacher who expounded the non-dualistic aspect of Vedanta. Soon, however, Madhva differed from his guru in his interpretation of Vedanta. He also at this time wrote an independent commentary upon the *Gita*, revealing scholarly ability and logical penetration.

As a result of this self-imposed discipline, he soon developed an independent philosophy of his own which he based on his studies of the ancient scriptures of India. About this time, he set out upon his travels through the whole peninsula of India. He encountered the exponents of many schools of thought, debated with them, and gained a hearing for his own doctrines. He passed away at the age of seventy-nine.

Besides a commentary upon the *Gita*, Madhva wrote commentaries upon the *Brahmasutras* and the *Upanishads*. He wrote many philosophical treatises in which he expounded the doctrines of his school and attacked those of others, particularly the Mayavada of Samkara.

HIS PHILOSOPHY OF REALISM

The fundamental principle upon which Madhva bases his theory of realism is that both the known and the object of knowledge must be real, for no knowledge is possible unless both of them are real. Knowledge necessarily implies its correlatives, the known and the knower. All knowledge therefore is relative. Absolute knowledge or the transcendental consciousness, in which all distinction between knowledge, knower, and known vanish—as defined in Yoga and by Samkara—cannot be admitted as true. Madhva says, 'No knowledge can be posited without a knower and an object known.'

According to him, the means and instruments of knowledge are perception, scriptural texts, and inference. Whatever is known through these valid means is directly related to the object of knowledge, which has a reality of its own.

On the basis of this theory of knowledge, Madhva proves the objective reality of the world. The world is real because it is perceived as such. The objects presented to our perception may be either destitute of change or subject to change. The fact that things are fleeting and changeable does not imply that they are unreal.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIFFERENCE

We experience difference. We see things and things, people and people, and we perceive them to be different from one another. Different also from all living beings and non-living things is God, Who exists in order that His law may be fulfilled in the universe, and in order that finite souls, less limited in power and intelligence, may find salvation from the sufferings and bondage of the world by loving Him and surrendering themselves to Him.

Madhva's whole philosophy is thus based upon this idea of difference and distinction. And distinction is known to be of five kinds: (1) God is distinct from individual souls; (2) God is distinct from non-living matter, (3) Each individual soul is distinct from every other; (4) Individual souls are distinct from matter; and (5) In matter, when divided, the parts are distinct from one another.

GOD

The universe is divided into two categories: Svatantra, Independent Being, and Asvatantra, dependent existences. God is the only Independent Being. He is the one Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent Being. How God, Who is distinct from individual souls and non-living things, can be omnipresent is explained by saying that He is not limited by time and space, and that the dependent existences 'do not form a resisting medium to His presence'.

MATTER

Matter is distinct from God and human souls and possesses only a dependent existence. God is the ruler of the universe, but the universe is real and eternally existent.

INDIVIDUAL SOULS

Each soul differs from every other, and all are distinct from God though they have dependent existences in Him. By nature souls are intelligent. Each soul when born into this world and invested with body and senses is in a state of bondage; but through continued struggle for many lives, may obtain release from these sufferings and this bondage.

Moreover, not only do souls differ from each other but there is also a distinction with respect to classes of souls. Three such classes exist, and accordingly their essential natures as well as their destinies differ. The class that is moral and devoted to God alone, will attain salvation and enjoy eternal felicity of heaven, called Vaikuntha. The second class will never attain salvation but will remain subject to reincarnation and experience both happiness and misery. The third class who revile God and His devotees, will never attain salvation but rather will suffer damnation.

SALVATION

Only such souls as are devoted to God will attain salvation, in the sense they will go to Vaikuntha and enjoy the beloved company of God. But even there, graduations and differences between souls exist.

A King said to a holy man, 'Dost thou ever remember me?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'whenever I forget my God.'—Saadi.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Lakshanasangraha (Sanskrit):
Edited by Bhikshu Gaurisankar.
Available from Bhari Devi,
vill, Puthi, P.O., Bavani Khera.
Pages 155. Price Re. 0-4-0.

The systems of Sanskrit philosophy, though hard for the beginner, have the great advantage of a precise terminology which once mastered with the help of appropriate definitions, further prosecution of study becomes much easy. Such definitions are scattered throughout a large body of literature known under the names of Vrittis, Bhashyas, and Vyakhyas. We have an exhaustive collection of them in the *Nyayakosha* published by the Bhandarkar Institute, Poona. But that work is beyond the means of the ordinary student, costly as it is. This pocket glossary containing definitions of 3,476 philosophical terms is, therefore, a very helpful publication to students of Sanskrit philosophy.

Nyayakalpasangraha (Sanskrit): By Senesvaracharya.
Published by A. Srinivasa Raghavan, M.A., Ambalapuram, Pudukkottai, (Trichinopoly). Pages xix + 67. Price Re. 0-8-0.

This is a summary of the topics dealt with in the *Sarirakasutras*, in varied metres, according to the Visishtadvaita school. The author was a great scholar who flourished between the time of Sri Ramanuja and Sri Vedanta Desika. Much deference is shown to his views by later writers. An accurate and critical edition of this little known text is certainly welcome to all who are interested in Visishtadvaita philosophy. The editor deserves the gratitude of all lovers of learning for having preserved a rare text from loss by this beautiful edition of it in

Devanagari script with a Foreword, index, and other necessary helps.

Sri Gangastotra (Sanskrit):
By Sri Tapovanasyamin. Published by Vaidyaraj Vallabharam Visvanath Pandit, Dhanvantari Bhavan, Raypur, Ahmedabad. Pages 22. Price, not mentioned.

This is a sweet, fluent, devotional poem on mother Ganges. It discloses the author's poetic talents and spirit of devotion. This poem, again, is another modern reminder of the vitality of Sanskrit language.

Ma Sarada (Gujarati): Published by the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot. Pages 56. Price Re. 0-3-0.

One gets here a simple account of the life and teachings of the Holy Mother in the Gujarati language.

Hamara Yoga aur uske uddesya (Hindi): Published by Sri Aravinda-granthamala. Pages 56. Price Re. 0-8-0.

The above booklet is an English translation of Sri Aurobindo's *The Yoga and its Objects*.

Mind: Its Mysteries and Control, Parts I and II: By Swami Sivananda. Published by the Gita Press, Gorakpur. Pages x + 244 and iv + 429 respectively. Price: Part I Re. 0-8-0; Part II Re. 1-0-0.

These volumes supply a mine of information on the various aspects of practical religion. The author has laid under contribution a wide range of Hindu writings pertaining to Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga. Those who make an intelligent use of the book are sure to be benefited by the instructions so directly and lucidly imparted here.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Ramakrishna Mission Report for the Year 1940.

The 32nd annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math on the 11th April. The following is a short report of the work done during the last year.

There were 61 Mission centres in India and abroad, and 64 Math centres working in close collaboration with the Mission, making up a total of 125 centres, besides 18 sub-centres. No less than 357 permanent institutions of various types were run, of which 275 belonged to the Mission proper. The Mission also undertook various temporary relief activities.

THE HEADQUARTERS

Besides directing the activities of the branch centres and supplying monastic workers to them, the Headquarters through its *Charitable Dispensary* served 25,744 patients and gave regular and occasional help to 10 students and 97 helpless widows and invalids, the total expenditure being Rs. 1,366-12-3. It also helped with monthly grants 15 Schools in different places with a total strength of 999. Many monks went all over India on *preaching tours* and held regular religious classes in and around Calcutta.

The Mission undertook *Flood Relief* work in the Midnapur District and distributed 432 mds. of rice, 1,129 pieces of new cloth and 825 pieces of old cloth to 1,395 persons belonging to 14 villages at a cost of Rs. 3,686-14-0. It also spent Rs. 275-4-0 for *Fire Relief* in Puri, Birbhum and Faridpur and Rs. 50-8-0 for *Malaria Relief* at Sonargaon, Dt. Dacca. For *Famine Relief* in the Thar-Parkar District in Sind, it spent through a local party Rs. 950-12-0.

BRANCH CENTRES

The activities carried on by the branch centres fall under:

(1) *Medical Service through Indoor Hospitals*—The centres at Rangoon, Benares, Kankhal, Brindaban, Midnapur, Tamluk and Taki have each been maintaining a hospital. The total number of general beds in these and of maternity beds at the Shishumangal Pratishthan, Calcutta, the Rangoon Sevashrama and the Taki Shivananda Hospital was 596. The Rangoon Sevashrama with its 200 beds, the Benares Home of Service and the Kankhal Sevashrama are the largest hospitals of the Mission. The above 8 centres treated altogether 13,930 indoor patients.

(2) *Medical Service through Outdoor Dispensaries*.—There were 40 Outdoor Dispensaries which treated 16,28,494 cases in all, the daily average being 4,462 as against 4,048 in 1939. The Sevashrama at Rangoon with its 3,70,644 out-patients and a daily average of 1,025 continued to hold the biggest record. The T.B. Clinic at Delhi treated 17,301 cases.

(3) *Help to the Poor and Temporary Relief*.—The branch centres also served 10,532 patients in their homes, distributed about 410 mds. of rice and 1,085 pieces of cloth. Besides Rs. 4,230-4-9 was spent for occasional and regular help to 1,276 and 339 persons. During the Midnapur Flood, the Tamluk centre organised a relief centre and helped 665 persons at a total cost of Rs. 1,219-7-9.

(4) *Educational Work*.—The educational work of the Mission was conducted through (a) *Secondary Schools*—Residential and otherwise. Of the former, that at Deoghar had 148 students, the Madras Students' Home had 119, and the Vidyalaya near Coimbatore had 97 students. Of the Day Schools, the two in Madras with 2,058 boys and 942 girls are the biggest in the Mission. The three mixed High Schools in Ceylon had a total strength of 560. The Mission conducted altogether 12

High Schools and 12 M. E. Schools with a total of 4,443 boys and 2,327 girls. (b) *Primary and Night Schools*—There were 58 Primary Schools with 3,377 boys and 1,647 girls, and 17 Night Schools with 638 students. (c) *Industrial and Vocational Schools*—The Industrial School, Madras, and the Belur Industrial School had 45 and 48 students respectively. The former specialises in automobile engineering with a five-year course. It also gives vocational education to all the students of the Residential School. Agricultural education was provided at the Sarisha and Mansadwip centres. The Bankura Sevashrama had a section for training Homoeopathic students, and the Shishumangal Pratishthan and the Rangoon Sevashrama trained midwives and compounders respectively. The Sarada Vidyalaya of Madras had a training section for lady teachers for elementary schools. (d) *Students' Homes*—32 centres, including the Madras and Calcutta Students' Homes, accommodated 1,050 students of different schools and colleges. They were given all facilities for study and for developing their health and character.

(5) *Uplift of Backward Classes and areas*.—The Mission has been trying its best to serve those classes and areas which have unfortunately fallen back culturally and educationally. Permanent centres like the educational and cultural centres in the Khasia and Jaintia Hills, as also the Ashrama Libraries, Schools, Dispensaries and Hospitals in villages like Taki, Sarisha, Magrajpur, Sonargaon, Baliati, Jayarambati, Sargachhi, etc., catered for the masses. Some of those centres organised tours with magic lanterns, gramophones, etc.

(6) *Spread of Culture and Spiritual ideas*.—Almost all centres conducted Libraries and Reading Rooms and organised public lectures and classes. Contacts with distinguished western scholars were also made, and the Mission's monastic workers carried the message of Vedanta to different

parts of India and foreign countries. In this connection, special mention may be made of the Institute of Culture in Calcutta, which has recently got the gift of a valuable library consisting of about 25,000 volumes from the heirs of Dr. Barid Baran Mukherjee of Calcutta. The Institute organised 32 lectures and 105 classes. The Mission Society at Rangoon had two Libraries containing 8,909 volumes. It conducted 82 classes and 25 lectures.

Foreign Work.—The foreign work of the Mission has been partly handicapped by the war. Thus the work in central Europe had to be stopped, the work in Paris had to be shifted to a less important township in unoccupied France, and the London work to a suburb. The work in the United States of America and the Argentina Republic is however flourishing. The Mission was quite successful in Mauritius, where a permanent centre is well on the way. The Singapore branch extended its work to Penang.

Schemes under development.—Substantial progress was made in connection with the T. B. Sanatorium at Dungri, near Ranchi, and the College at Belur. The Sanatorium has got 240 acres of land and has collected about Rs. 70,000, on which buildings are going to be constructed. The progress made with the College scheme is also encouraging. It will be started in July next.

Income and Expenditure.—The total income during the year 1940 was Rs. 11,94,578-12-6 and the total expenditure Rs. 13,00,714-14-½.

Conclusion.—From the above it will be apparent that the Mission has done a considerable amount of work during the year under review. While expressing its gratitude to all who contributed to it, the Mission appeals to one and all to continue their whole-hearted support and co-operation so that the philanthropic organisation founded by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda may make greater progress in the future.

**Opening of the 'Ramu'
Memorial Hall,
Sri Ramakrishna Mission
High School,
Thyagarayanagar.**

A pleasant function came off on the evening of 5th May when the 'Ramu' Memorial Hall, the prayer hall in the new buildings of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission High School, Thyagarayanagar, was declared open in the presence of a distinguished gathering by Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer. It was also the occasion of the unveiling of the portraits of Rao Saheb C. Ramaswami Iyengar who was the life-secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and Sri S. Vasudevachariar who has been associated with the Mission activities in Madras right from their beginning and who is now the Manager of the Mission schools. The unveiling of the portraits was performed by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K.C.I.E. and Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri respectively.

Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer in requesting Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer to unveil the portrait of

C. Ramaswami Iyengar, who was affectionately called 'Ramu', paid glowing tributes to his simple faith in a religion of service which, while removing mountain-like obstacles in the way, had remarkably worked for the wonderful progress of the Home. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer referred to his early days of friendship with Ramu and recounted how Ramu came under the influence of the dynamic personality of Swami Vivekananda. It may not be out of place here to add that more than anything else it was to the influence of the personal contact which Ramu had with Swami Ramakrishnanandaji, that Ramu owed the inspiration which expressed itself in the life-long service of the Home. Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, spoke how he and Sri S. Vasudevachariar were not only friends but friends in profession as well and how Sri Vasudevachariar came to dedicate himself to the service of the Mission. Rt. Hon. Sastri characterized Sri Vasudevachariar as a Karma-sannyasin who even at the ripe old age of 73 without retiring for repose was engaged in active service. The function came to a close with a vote of thanks.

Whatever work you perform with sincerity and earnest longing will attract His Grace and help towards realisation. Through His Grace the conditions for realisation will become perfect. These conditions are association with the holy, right discrimination of the Real from the unreal, and the finding of the real Guru or true spiritual master. If your family depends upon you, perhaps your brother will assume its responsibility for you. Perhaps your wife will not hinder you in your spiritual life, but will rather help you; or perhaps you will not marry at all and will not be attached to the world in any way. When such conditions become absolutely favourable, the realisation of God becomes easy.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

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THE SPIRITUAL PATH

By **Swami Yatiswarananda**

PREPARING THE INSTRUMENT

In order to do any form of spiritual practice, both the body and the mind must be made fit. Without having fulfilled this chief condition if one tries to undergo spiritual practices in a violent manner, one cannot avoid great reactions. Even if the right thing is done by the wrong person, and in a wrong manner, troubles are unavoidable.

Have plenty of physical and mental rest; give both to the body and mind as much relaxation as possible; and practise a spirit of self-surrender to the Divine Will, that lies at the back of our individual will.

Spiritual aspirants should try to perfect their body and mind through the performance of the duties of life and the graduated ethical and spiritual practices. And it is when the instruments are ready, that spiritual practice may be intensified, but not

otherwise. So without thinking too much of the goal, one should rather follow the path. The instrument of God-vision is first to be made and perfected, and then God-vision becomes an accomplished fact as a matter of course. When the telescope is ready, the vision of the distant stars and planets becomes an accomplished fact in no time.

Intellect, feeling, and will can be combined by rising to the plane of the Soul, and not by taking one's stand in the intellect or any one of the faculties.

THE RIGHT APPROACH

No spiritual practice is to be done reading in some books alone. One may, of course, read books for getting informations; but one should know which ideas are to be taken up and which to be left to themselves. We may read of various practices; but we should not commence them without knowing first of all which are good

for ourselves. We may know of very many approaches; this certainly expands our mental outlook. But we should know which is the right approach for us. During the period of experiments we should proceed slowly, noticing the physical and mental changes that take place in us and adjusting ourselves accordingly.

The right method followed by the wrong person brings about bad results. Hence the aspirant is expected to be properly qualified; but in modern times anyone may get any book, read about some practice, follow it, and then come to grief. Instructions always differ with individuals; and what is, as we say, nectar to one, may prove to be poison to another. Each one must follow the law of his own being. An aspirant must adjust himself securely to his mental and physical environments. If the superstructure is built on the right foundation, it stands all right. Otherwise it tumbles down.

INNER AND OUTER GURU

The real Guru, who reveals to us the Truth, is in our own heart; and He is no other than the Divine Himself. His message very often comes through some person, who also is called a Guru. So the Divine is sometimes called the Guru of Gurus. We should not expect much from the outer Guru, but should try to be in tune with the inner Guru—the Divine in us, the Soul of our soul—and draw knowledge and inspiration from Him. You may look upon your Ishtam (the Holy Personality appealing to you most) as the embodiment of the Guru of Gurus.

Both the teacher and the pupil should try to be as much impersonal as possible. This becomes possible

if the teacher tries to see the Divine in the student, and the student also the Divine in the teacher. One should try to think of the other not as a person, but as the manifestation of the Principle; and *oneself also as such*. This is the beginning of practical Vedanta and then the ideal compasses everything and every being, and also in oneself who receives it. It is then that the spiritual teaching becomes fruitful, and one is able to realize the same Divine Presence in all. You want to practise Jnana-Yoga, and here is a step towards the real Jnana.

DIVINE PRINCIPLE

Personality, whether of the God-man or of any ordinary individual has ultimately no reality of its own, even though it has certainly got empirical reality; because we feel it. We should learn to feel the Principle also, and feel it to be more real than the personality. Time has come when we should stress this point, but without in any way doing violence to yourself. Try to remember it whenever you find it convenient. It does not matter if you forget it at other times. The ideal can be realized only in due course by passing through ups and downs.

In the midst of the changes of life try to think of the changeless, ever-present Divine in you. Like the mariner's compass let the mind always turn towards the north Pole at all hours and places. In each personality there are the individual soul and the Universal Spirit.

Try to be in touch with the Universal Spirit. Or, if you are in a 'personal mood', take the Divine with you, let your Ishtam accompany you in your journey and keep you com-

pany, protect you from all harm, and bring peace to you, wherever you go.

Try to feel that you are a part of the Infinite, and be always in touch with It. Try also to recognize the same Divine Principle in all personalities—wife, husband, children, relatives, friends, and strangers. The more you succeed in associating the Infinite, the Divine Principle, with your personality and all personalities, your emotions will be more and more sublimated and purified and you will be naturally calm, steady, and wide-awake. To begin with, it is enough if one looks upon the Divine as the Whole, and the individuals as parts. First, we have to grasp the One in the many and then alone will come the question of the One without a second, the central idea of real Monism.

The bubble is not the ocean, not even the wave. It is the substance of the bubble, *viz.*, water—that is one with the ocean, the same as the ocean. We can take the monistic standpoint only when we can think of the Spirit as distinct from the form. When we cannot do that, we may think only of the Immanent aspect. Meditations on the Immanent prepare us for approaching the One without a second.

You need not give any thoughts to psychic experiences at all. Through the unfoldment of higher consciousness you would have more and more of the experience of the Infinite Presence in your soul and then you will feel the same Presence in others also. To the extent to which we become pure in thought, word, and deed, to that extent we have realization.

When on page 187 of the *Inspired Talks* Swami Vivekananda says:

'Your own will is all that answers prayers', he is speaking from the monistic standpoint. The Monist, giving up all the limitations of his personality, and identifying himself with the Infinite, sees everything and every being as the manifestation of the Self, the 'I', the Infinite consciousness.

It is not the 'little you', but the 'big you' that answers the prayers. The microcosm and the macrocosm are not different. So God and the devotee are not separate. God in one form is the worshipped, and He again in another form is the devotee. He, as the devotee prays, and again He, as the worshipped, responds.

On the relative plane we feel we are different from God. The prayer rises from our little soul, but the response comes from God—from our higher Self—and not from our lower self.

So by the 'you' that answers the prayer, the Swami means not the small you, but the big you. Here he takes the standpoint of the Monist, who holds that the One appears as many. Our soul is like a point, and God is the Infinite circle. The circle appears as points. The circle as a point prays, the circle as circle responds. To give another analogy: the ocean becomes the bubbles without losing its ocean-nature. So the ocean as bubble prays, again the ocean as the ocean responds to the prayer. The Infinite as finite prays, the Infinite as the Infinite answers the prayer. And according to Monism, our little 'I' or 'you' is a manifestation of the 'Infinite I' or 'You'. So I pray and I again answer my prayer, you pray and you again answer your prayer. This is the idea underlying the pithy sentence.

BHAKTI

But as long as we are on the relative plane and are conscious of our limited existence and think of ourselves as personalities, our personality is real to us and as such we should worship and pray to the Divine—our higher Self. Really there is no conflict or contradiction as the standpoints are different.

You should not worry about the Monist's attitude. Yours should be the attitude of the devotee. To you, religion is, as Swami Vivekananda in one of his lectures says, 'the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the eternal God.' The highest ideal of devotion he speaks of on page 58 of the *Inspired Talks*: 'Day and night think of God and think of nothing else so far as possible. The daily necessary thoughts can all be thought through God.' Again he says on page 177: 'Giving up the desire of pleasure and pain, gain or loss, worship God day and night.'

But the aspirant should proceed slowly and steadily. Before one can begin to run, one must learn to walk. Body and mind are to be properly trained through the performance of the duties of one's life, through moral culture and prayer and meditation at fixed hours. And then only it is possible for the devotee to worship God day and night through all forms of activities, physical and mental.

With our sense of individuality which is real to us now, we should try to pray to the Divine and worship Him as well as we can. And the response comes from the Divine, our higher Self or God, who manifests Himself as Buddha, Christ, or Ramakrishna.

HARMONY OF THE PATHS

Jnana and Bhakti are to be blended; but different individuals may have these in different proportions. Have both Jnana and Bhakti combined—a harmony of the paths of knowledge and devotion—as one has both the elements in one's nature. Bhakti is to be tempered with Jnana.

LAW OF GROWTH

Life consists of a series of rises and falls. One should not get too much elated during the rise; nor too much depressed during the fall. And at all hours one should try to be in touch with the Divine within and outside. In this lies the secret of the balanced state, and also of progress towards the goal.

Again it is not enough if we have the highest ideal before us. We must know also that as we cannot reach it all of a sudden we should have ideals that serve as stepping-stones leading towards it. This holds good as regards moral culture and spiritual practice. We have to pass through the lower regions if we want to attain to the summit. This is a point we should never lose sight of.

Since spiritual growth is a slow transformation, no great results can be expected until we follow the path patiently for a long time. By trying to do too much in a fit of enthusiasm, we only do harm to ourselves and retard our progress. We should never try to imitate Ramakrishna in this respect. He could afford to have a tremendous yearning and undergo super-human disciplines as His body and mind were exceptionally fit for spiritual strivings.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS IN YOGA

The aspirant should always bear in mind these passages of the *Bhagavad-*

gita: 'Success in spiritual practice is not for him who eats too much or too little, for him who sleeps too much or too little. To him who is temperate in eating and recreation, in his efforts, in sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery.'

WORK AND WORSHIP

At first there is a difference between work and worship. Later on work too becomes worship, and the whole life, one of undivided consecration. Work and worship must go hand in hand. Both of these effect the purification of our mind and help us in the unfoldment of the higher consciousness in us, and so they are to be looked upon as twofold forms of spiritual practice. At first we should try to make our activity as much selfless as possible, offering the fruits of our work to the Divine. Learn to work, maintaining something of the meditative mood, that inner balance and poise which comes to one after a good meditation.

INNER AND OUTER LIFE

There should be as good a co-ordination as possible between intellect, feeling, and will. Further there should be a balance between the outer life and inner life, between our active life and thought-life. A balance between the inner and outer life is to be attained by everybody, maybe in different proportions.

You have to be true to the 'kindred points of heaven and home', without trying to soar too high and without attempting to avoid facing the realities of life, even if they are unpleasant.

Try to be in tune with the Indwelling Spirit—the real Guru—and be inspired and directed by Him in this play of life.

It is hard for the rich—for those who think they are rich—to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who have wealth may replace the sense of ownership by that of trusteeship. Inner renunciation is more important than mere outer renunciation. As Swami Vivekananda says: 'True knowledge (Jnanam) teaches that the world should be renounced, but not on that account abandoned. To live in the world and be out of it, is the truest renunciation.'

Most people suffer because of the discrepancy between the spiritual aspiration and the grim reality one has to face in the worldly life. This suffering by itself is not an evil. It may be even for one's good, if it acts as an incentive for finding an inner adjustment by means of which one may gradually feel that one is not really of the world, even if one has to live in the world.

In a certain sense we all get what we deserve. We wish for a thing; we get it; and along with it the good and evil also inseparably follow. We seek some forms of happiness and then, as Swami Vivekananda says, 'happiness comes putting on the crown of misery.' We cannot accept the one without the other also. Later on, we learn to work as instruments in the hands of the Divine.

We wish for the satisfaction of some worldly desire. We may get the object of desire, but also we get the trouble associated with it. Our present state is the result of our past worldly desires and of our present desires. Let us learn to be as desireless as possible, to adjust ourselves to the circumstances that we ourselves have brought about and then rise above them. Let us work out our destiny and learn to depend on the

Divine more and more as we work out our Karma. Then the world becomes a training-ground. Through it we pass on to the Divine. Even then we may continue to remain in the world outwardly. But really speaking we are no more of it. We are the Lord's wherever we are.

KARMA

Certain forms of Karma are to be worked out through suffering. We should feel somewhat relieved when we see that suffering means a reduction in the burden of Karma. Besides, the helplessness brought about by suffering may be utilized spiritually by practising self-surrender to the Divine all the more. In pain and pleasure, in life and in death, the Lord is our own. He is the Soul of our soul, the Life of our life.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that diseases are the taxes we have to pay for living in the house of the body. We have to pay these taxes sometimes in good instalments. And then for some time there may be a respite. The Master was often heard to say during his great illness: 'Let the body feel the pain. O my mind, do Thou remain in bliss!'

Move onwards without trying to run too much. We have got to work out the Karma that has begun to bear fruit already. If we try to escape it, we have to pay for it with compound interest. God-realization is certainly the Goal, but this can be got not merely through spiritual culture, but also through the proper working out of the Karma we have in store. We must know what is proper and necessary or improper and unnecessary. Hence we should be careful both about the inner ideal and outside action. Proceed slowly and steadily . exhausting your Karma.

being in tune with the Divine within and also careful about what you do. We must correct ourselves always both on the thought-plane and also on the plane of action.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORLD

We very often expect too much from others and when we cannot get it, we feel disappointed. What can poor men do? We have a saying in Sanskrit: 'Having drunk of the wine of ignorance, the whole world has become mad.' So the mad world will and can behave in only a mad way. But it is a greater madness on our part to expect the mad to act in a sane way. Instead of getting angry, we should be sympathetic towards those who do not know what they do and cannot control themselves out of helplessness, even if they know it.

HOLY ASSOCIATION

Sometimes in the course of our spiritual progress we are likely to develop a sort of unhealthy introversion. This is to be avoided among other things by going in for holy association. I mean by coming in close contact with spiritually-minded persons, following more or less the same path, and comparing notes with them.

Our individual consciousness is to be brought in touch with the infinite Divine Consciousness. This is the surest way of resolving the whirlpool in our mind. When Divine contact is hard to achieve, the company of spiritual souls and holy talks with them will help us a good deal. People with morbid introversion want to avoid others, those with morbid extroversion seek other's company just for gossiping and killing their time. The true devotees maintain a balance between inner and outer life and seek the company of the spiritually-minded. 'They discuss spiritual

matters and strengthen their faith by learning from one another. That is why Sri Ramakrishna used to advocate the meeting of devotees, as you find in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.

If one can be in tune with the Divine always, no holy company may be necessary. Otherwise, association with fellow-aspirants is very, very necessary for spiritual progress.

Try to have contact with the Indwelling Spirit in you. He is the Soul of our souls and the Real Guru. Whenever you feel the need of holy company, please think of the Lord, and also repeat His Name if you wish so. He is the Power behind us all, and without Him we all are nothing.

REALIZE THE IMPERSONAL THROUGH THE PERSONAL

When you come to think of anyone in a personal way and feel it to be so, call up the thought of your Ishtam and merge all thoughts about the person into Him, his form also into His form. And in and through Him you may realize the Formless also. We all meet in Him who manifests Himself as the Holy Personality and Power and also as all ordinary personalities.

The Universal Principle in His Infinite mercy and compassion manifested Himself as different Holy Personalities. He is drawing us all

towards Him. Some may be drawn towards one Holy Personality, while others towards other Holy Personalities—but all ultimately reach the same Principle—our common Background.

As long as you do not find anyone to talk about things spiritual, learn to talk with the Lord. It will be a source of great blessing to you, you will see. May He always inspire and guide you. I wish you to come in touch more and more with the Personal-Impersonal aspect of your Ishtam, and be more and more impersonal, looking upon yourself more in terms of the Atman—the Spirit—than in terms of the personality, the body, and the mind. You may read every day a few meditations like this: 'I am neither mind nor intellect, neither memory nor ego, etc.'

You may pray to the Great Personality who appeals to you, looking upon the Personality as the manifestation of the Divine Principle. You may also take His Name, if you want to, when you pray for inspiration and guidance. The more you advance, the more you will feel Him to be the Indwelling Spirit; the Soul of our souls—the Soul of all that exists. He is as it were the channel through which you approach the Divine Principle, the Infinite and the All-Pervading.

Not to impose one's mind and vital will of the Divine but to receive the Divine's will and follow it, is the true attitude of sadhana (spiritual practice). Not to say, 'This is my right, want, claim, need, requirement, why do I not get it?' but to give oneself, to surrender and to receive with joy whatever the Divine gives, not grieving or revolting, is the better way. Then what you receive will be the right thing for you.—*Sri Aurobindo*.

THE UPANISHADIC APPROACH TO PHILOSOPHY: II THE MANDUKYA

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I

THE *Mandukya* is one of the shortest Upanishads, consisting of only twelve brief passages. But so vital is its teaching that a later Upanishad, the *Muktikopanishad* declares it the epitome, and Sankaracharya calls it the essence, of all the Upanishads.

Even in its brief compass it represents one distinctive approach to philosophy. It proceeds by an analysis of the human consciousness and its states. Other Upanishads make their approach through other problems such as those of immortality and the criticism of the objective categories of experience. The distinctive approach of the *Mandukya* consists in a direct analysis of the subjective states of 'consciousness'.

These are waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleeping. They are so obvious and simple that they hardly need an explicit statement, and they do not look as if they have any revelation to make to us in Philosophy. However, their analysis and investigation are so highly valued in Indian philosophy as to be made a distinct pathway to reality. In later thought, it is usually referred to as the principle of the *avasthatriya*—the three states of consciousness.

II

Even in the bare statement of these 'conscious' states there is one factor which immediately rouses wonder and reflection. This is the fact of unconsciousness as an aspect of 'consciousness'. Sleep with its character of unconsciousness has much exercised thought in East and West. Its origin and cessation are still dark in modern

physiology and psychology. Psycho-analysis has brought the unconscious mind into prominence in contemporary psychology. The psychology of memory has wrestled with this problem in explaining the retention of past experiences. And thus, there is the common 'unconscious' experience of deep sleep forcing this problem on us. It is of course difficult for us to picture exactly this condition. We may conceive of it as an extremely low degree of attention, on the analogy of the warning of attention from the centre of a field of consciousness towards its outer and outer regions. Or we may regard it as a residual condition, on the analogy of the memories of past experiences. Or we may regard it, as the *Mandukya* would, as a potential condition of consciousness, a condition of causative potency which has not yet realized its effects. However, so familiar a phenomenon as sleep presents to science and philosophy this great problem of the unconscious and the conscious and raises the question of the true nature of the self.

III

The other states of consciousness, too, *viz.*, waking and dreaming are full of difficult problems. Our perception of an external world has shipwrecked many a school of philosophy,—the Buddhist, the British empiricist, the Greek sophist, and the modern Associationist. Our dreams too are more complex than one would suspect. Their problems exercise the psycho-analyst, the psychic researcher, and the general psychologist.

IV

Besides the analysis of 'conscious' states, the *Mandukya* tries also to furnish a brief classification of the psycho-physical organization of man. Briefly, there are the five aspects of life (Prana); the five sense-organs of outer perception; the five organs of activity; the inner sense of mind (Manas); the capacity of determinate judgment (Buddhi); individuality and the awareness of it as the 'I' (Ahamkara); and the general principle of consciousness (Chitta). No formal list of this kind can do more than barely indicate the main aspects of the highly complex and organic character of the individual and his consciousness. Inevitably, it leaves out all the emotional colour of life, its wonderful unity, and the depths from which its highest aspirations surge. A list of this kind gives one the false idea that man is a piece of cumbrous machinery. The German philosopher Kant, who attempted to give such a list, has been often criticized for his cumbrous picture and it has even been remarked that the clanking and creaking of Kant's machinery can almost be heard!

Such caustic criticism apart, there is no doubt that even a brief analysis is a good protection against narrow theories of knowledge like sensationalism.

V

All this analysis is not the whole story, or even the best part of it. Some schools of philosophy like Positivism are apt to stop here. But the *Mandukya* finds that the very logic of its threefold classification urges it to go on and recognize a deeper aspect.

This is the fourth—the Turiya. At the basis of all states of consciousness and unconsciousness, there is this state which is deeper than both.

In a passage which is rarely equalled even in the other Upanishads in its solemn and hymnal tone and its depth of fervour, the *Mandukya* declares this basis and essence of the self:

'Neither the outer consciousness, nor the inner, nor both together; neither the general principle of consciousness nor any particular mode of it; nor unconsciousness; but unperceivable, unphenomenal, incomprehensible, beyond description, without defining and limiting qualities, beyond all verbal epithets; comprising the self alone, supernal, peaceful, good, the one universal. This is the fourth state of the self. This is the true self (Atman). This indeed is the state to be realized.'

The last two statements, that it is only a fourth state and yet the self to be realized, seem inconsistent. But their real significance is to point to its reality as the basis of all states and as the ultimate reservoir and essence of the self. It is the live core of which all states are the manifestations.

VI

The *Mandukya* is too brief to convey an adequate account of this principle. But its implicit teaching is that this principle, which in our analysis we reach as the fourth principle, Turiya, stands for the highest aspirations of man. It represents his highest fulfillment in knowledge, action, and feeling; in Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Furthermore, it is in essence the same as the law and substance of the

objective universe. The whole is a manifestation of one ultimate reality. From this point of view, the *Mandukya* gives a picture of the Absolute as more than a dull unconscious or 'neutral' substance but as a self, an Intelligence. It is not inappropriate or untrue, to speak of the Ultimate Reality in terms of the four states of consciousness. The physical world is its gross manifestation as well as the object of its waking state. The dream world is its subtle manifestation, comprising the residues of its past experiences. The third stage of unconscious sleep would correspond to Its unmanifested causal stage prior to all objects and effects. The fourth aspect would correspond to Its essential nature as the Infinite and the Absolute. To this aspect belongs all that the three lesser stages cannot express. The third condition corresponding to dreamless sleep, and expressing the unmanifested causal condition of the ultimate, may seem to be the highest condition,—its pure form as a God antecedent to creation. But not so, to the seers of the Upanishad. The *Mandukya* declares 'This Atman is indeed above the unmanifested.' The unmanifested is only one condition,—one partial condition of being. The *Mandukya* presses on to a more comprehensive point of view. The Absolute comprehends not merely the first unmanifested condition but also the process and the goal of the manifestation. It is hopeless for us to try and get a clear picture of such an infinite and absolute. But this is no reason why we should deny or not adequately recognize such features of it as experience and logic force on us. 'We are driven to accept an

absolute, which we cannot describe in any single category without realizing that. It is also more than that category. It is transcendent and yet also immanent; it is the origin and yet also the goal of all manifestation. It is the beginning, the process, and the end of all things.

The *Mandukya* tries to illustrate its supernal, absolute character, with reference to two factors, time and verbal symbolism.

It is immanent in the past, present, and future 'moments' of time. It bears all the actuality of the present and the potentiality of the future. And yet, as the basis of all these changes, and the passage of time, it is above process,—it is non-temporal, timeless, eternal.

Similarly, It is above all symbols. The symbol Aum with its three components of A, U, M, can only describe the three lesser aspects of the absolute, but not the fourth, its transcendent nature. It is not a mere totality of these or any parts, but a life above any one of them or even their summation.

The reality of such an Absolute is one of the impregnable conclusions of true philosophy. It raises several problems which to the formal intellect appear insoluble. Two such problems are the creation of the finite and the nature of finite individuality. Commentators on the *Mandukya*, like Gaudapada, Sankaracharya, and others extend the scope of this Upanishad to include inquiries into these special problems. But the Upanishad itself is content to make a comprehensive analysis of the states of consciousness and point the way to the Absolute, and the solidarity of all life and existence.

DISTRACTIONS II

By Aldous Huxley

Reproduced from 'Vedanta and the West'

IN an earlier article I gave some account of the psychological nature of distractions and of their significance as obstacles in the path of those who seek to attain enlightenment. In the paragraphs which follow, I shall describe some of the methods which have been found useful in overcoming these obstacles, in circumventing the tricks of the imbecile whom we carry about with us as a secondary personality.

Distractions afflict us not only when we are attempting formal meditation or contemplation, but also and even more dangerously in the course of our active, everyday life. Many of those who undertake spiritual exercises, whether yogic or Christian, tend all too frequently to confine their efforts at concentrating the mind strictly to business hours—that is to say, to the hours they actually spend in meditation. They forget that it is possible for a man or woman to achieve, during meditation, a high degree of mental concentration and even a kind of subjectively satisfying pseudo-eccstasy, while remaining at bottom an unregenerate ego. It is not an uncommon thing to meet with people who spend hours of each day doing spiritual exercises and who, in the intervals, display as much spite, prejudice, jealousy, greed and silliness as the most 'unspiritual' of their neighbours. The reason for this is that such people make no effort to adapt to the exigencies of ordinary life those practices which they make use of during their times of formal meditation. This is, of course, not

at all surprising. It is much easier to catch a glimpse of reality under the perfect conditions of formal meditation than to 'practise the presence of God' in the midst of the boredom, annoyances and constant temptations of family and professional life. What the English mystic, Benet Fitch, calls 'active annihilation' or the sinking of the self in God at every moment of the day, is much harder to achieve than 'passive annihilation' in mental prayer. The difference between the two forms of self-annihilation is analogous to the difference between scientific work under laboratory conditions and scientific work in the field. As every scientist knows, a great gulf separates the achievement of results in the laboratory and the application of one's discoveries to the untidy and disconcerting world outside its walls. Laboratory work and work in the field are equally necessary in science. Analogously, in the practice of the unitive life, the laboratory work of formal meditation must be supplemented by what may be called 'applied mysticism' during the hours of everyday activity. For this reason I propose to divide this article into two sections, the first dealing with distractions in times of recollection, the second with the obscuring and obstructive imbecilities of daily life.

All teachers of the art of mental prayer concur in advising their pupils never to struggle against the distractions which arise in the mind during recollection. The reason for this is simple. 'The more a man operates,

the more he is and exists. And the more he is and exists, the less God is and exists within him.' Every enhancement of the separate personal self produces a corresponding diminution of the consciousness of divine reality. But the voluntary struggle against distractions automatically enhances the separate personal self and therefore reduces the individual's chance of coming to an awareness of reality. In the process of trying forcibly to abolish our God-eclipsing imbecilities, we merely deepen the darkness of our native ignorance. This being so, we must give up our attempt to fight distractions and find ways of circumventing and evading them. One method consists in simply 'looking over the shoulder' of the imbecile who stands between us and the object of our meditation or our imageless contemplation. The distractions appear in the foreground of consciousness; we take notice of their presence, then lightly, without effort or tension of will, we shift the focus of attention to the reality in the background. In many cases the distractions will lose their obsessive 'thereness' and gradually fade away.

Alternatively, when distractions come, the attempt to practise imageless contemplation or the 'simple regard' may be temporarily given up, and attention directed to the distractions themselves, which are then used as objects of discursive meditation, preparatory to another return to the 'simple regard' later on. Two methods of making profitable use of distractions are commonly recommended. The first consists in objectively examining the distractions, and observing which of them

have their origins in the passions and which of them arise in the imbecile side of the mind. The process of following thoughts and images back to their source, of uncovering, here the purposive and passional, there the merely imbecile manifestations of egotism, is an admirable exercise in mental concentration, as well as a means for increasing that self-knowledge which is one of the indispensable pre-requisites to a knowledge of God. 'A man,' wrote Meister Eckhart, 'has many skins in himself, covering the depths of his heart. Man knows so many other things; he does not know himself. Why, thirty or forty skins or hides, just like an ox's or a bear's, so thick and hard, cover the soul. Go into your own ground and learn to know yourself there.' The dispassionate and scientific examination of distractions is one of the best ways of knowing the 'thirty or forty skins' which constitute our personality, and discovering, beneath them, the Self, the immanent Godhead, the Kingdom of Heaven within us. Discursive meditation on the skins passes naturally into a simple regard directed to the ground of the soul.

The second method of making use of distractions for the purpose of defeating distractions is merely a variant on the first. The difference between the two methods is a difference in the quality of the emotional tone accompanying the examination of the disturbing thoughts and images. In the first method, the examination is dispassionate; in the second, it is accompanied by a sense of contrition and self-humiliation. In the words of the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, 'when thou

feelest that thou mayest in no wise put them (distractions, imbecile and passionnal) down, cower then down under them as a caitiff and a coward overcome in battle, and think that it is but folly to strive any longer with them, and therefore thou yieldest thyself to God in the hands of thine enemies. And feel then thyself as though thou wert overcome forever. . . . And surely, I think, if this device be truly conceived, it is naught else but a true knowing and a feeling of thyself as thou art, a wretch and a filthy thing, far worse than naught: the which knowing and feeling is meekness. And this meekness meriteth to have God himself mightily descending, to venge thee on thine enemies, so as to take thee up and cherishingly dry thy ghostly eyes, as the father doth his child that is on the point to perish under the mouths of wild swine or mad biting bears.'

We now come to the problem of dealing with distractions in common life—in the field rather than in the laboratory. Active annihilation or, to use the phrase made familiar by Brother Lawrence, the constant practice of the presence of God at all moments of the day, is a work of supreme difficulty. Most of those who attempt it make the mistake of treating field work as though it were laboratory work. Finding themselves in the midst of things, they turn away from things, either physically, by retreat, or psychologically, by an act of introversion. But the shrinking from things and necessary external activities is an obstacle in the way of self-annihilation; for to shrink from things is to assert by implication that things still mean a great deal to one. Introversion from

things for the sake of God may, by giving them undue importance, exalt things to the place that should be occupied by God. What is needed, therefore, is not physical flight or introversion from things, but the capacity to undertake necessary activity in a spirit of non-attachment, of self-annihilation in reality. This is, of course, the doctrine of the Gita. (It should be noted, however, that the Gita—if it is meant to be taken literally, which one hopes it isn't—suggests that it is possible to commit murder in a state of self-annihilation in God. In various forms, this doctrine of non-attachment has been used by aberrant sectaries of every religion to justify every kind of wickedness and folly, from sexual orgies to torture. But, as a matter of plain psychological fact, such activities are entirely unannihilatable in God. Going to war, like the heroes of the Gita, indulging in unlimited sexual promiscuity, like some of the Illuminati of the West, are activities which cannot result in anything but an enhancement of the separate personal self and an eclipsing of divine reality. Non-attachment cannot be practised except in relation to intrinsically good or ethically neutral actions; the idea that it can be practised in relation to bad actions is a delusion, springing from the wish of the ego to go on behaving badly, while justifying such behaviour by means of a high and apparently spiritual philosophy.)

To achieve the active annihilation, by which alone the distractions of common life may be overcome, the aspirant must begin by avoiding, not merely all bad actions, but also, if possible, all unnecessary and silly

ones. Listening to the average radio programme, seeing the average motion picture, reading the comic strips—these are merely silly and imbecile activities; but though not wicked, they are almost as unannihilatable as the activities of lynching and fornication. For this reason it is obviously advisable to avoid them.

Meanwhile, what is to be done in the psychological field? First, it is necessary to cultivate a constant awareness of the reality that is everything and the personal self that is less than nothing. Only on this condition can the desired non-attachment be achieved. No less important than the avoidance of unnecessary and unannihilatable activities and the cultivation of awareness is emptying of the memory and the suppression of foreboding. Anyone who pays attention to his mental processes soon discovers that a large proportion of his time is spent in chewing the cud of the past and foretasting the future. We return to the past, sometimes because random memories rise mechanically into consciousness; sometimes because we like flattering our egotism by the recalling of past triumphs and pleasures, the censoring and embellishing of past pains and defeats; sometimes, too, because we are sick of ourselves and, thinking to 'repent of our sins' return with a gloomy satisfaction to old offences. As for the future, our preoccupation with it is sometimes apprehensive sometimes compensatory and wishful. In either case, the present is sacrificed to dreams of no longer existent or hypothetical situations. But it is a matter of empirical observation that the road to spiritual eternity is through the immediate animal eternity

of the species present. None can achieve eternal life who has not first learned to live, not in the past or in the future, but now—in the moment at the moment. Concerning the God-eclipsing folly of taking anxious thought for the future the Gospels have much to say. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof—and, we might add, sufficient unto the place. We make a habit of feeling disquietude about distant evils, in regard to which we can do no good, and we think that such disquietude is a sign of our sensibility and compassion. It would probably be more nearly true to say, with St. John of the Cross, that 'disquietude is always vanity, because it serves no good. Yea, even if the whole world were thrown into confusion, and all things in it, disquietude on that account would still be vanity.' What is true of things remote in space and in the future is also true of things remote in the past. We must teach ourselves not to waste our time and our opportunities to know reality by dwelling on our memories. Let the dead bury their dead. 'The emptying of the memory,' says St. John of the Cross, 'though the advantages of it are not so great as those of the state of union, yet merely because it delivers souls from much sorrow, grief and sadness, besides imperfections and sins, is in itself a great good.'

Such, then, in briefest summary, are some of the methods by which distractions can be overcome, not merely in the laboratory of formal meditation, but also (which is much harder) in the world of common life. As always, it is enormously easier to write and read about such methods than to put them into practice.

CONTINENCE AND ITS CREATIVE POWER

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

INDIA, THE HOME OF CONTINENCE

In ancient days absolute continence was not observed outside India; it was some of the Vedic Rishis who first practised it. We have it in *Prasna Upanishad* that when six Rishis, *viz.*, Sukesha, Bharadwaja and others, came to Rishi Pippalada for receiving the highest wisdom, the latter asked them to observe continence for one year more, at the end of which he promised to initiate them into the highest wisdom. Again in the *Chandogya Upanishad* we have the dialogue of Indra, Virochana, and Brahma, where Brahma taught Indra the knowledge of Reality, after making him undergo Brahmacharya (continence) for hundred-and-one years.

From India this ideal of perfect continence spread to the Neo-Platonists in Egypt and to the Pythagoreans in Greece, and then to many other countries of Europe in later days in a more or less degree. It was, again, from India that this idea spread to various countries of Asia. The Persians took it from India. The Buddhist preachers carried it far and wide. The Essenes took it from the Buddhists; and Christians partly from the Neo-Platonists and partly from the Essenes.

No people have emphasized the need of continence so strongly as the Indians. For them it is the firmest foundation of life. Sister Nivedita remarks that of all the ideals which have ever been dreamt of in student life in any country that of continence is the highest and the noblest.

According to the Ayurveda and Yoga Sastra, celibacy is the *sine qua non* of perfect health and longevity. Sacred books of all religions extol its creative power and enjoin it as the cardinal virtue in spiritual life. For example, religious widows and spiritual aspirants vowed to voluntary chastity and poverty keep up generally a youthful appearance even in a ripe old age and live an unusually long life.

WHAT IT MEANS TO GENIUSES

'All great mystics and the majority of great idealists, the giants among the Creators of the Spirit,' remarks Romain Rolland, 'have clearly and instinctively realized what formidable power of concentrated soul, of accumulated creative energy, is generated by renunciation of the organic and psychic expenditure of sexuality. Even free thinkers in matters of faith, even such sensualists as Beethoven, Balzac, and Flaubert have felt this.' 'Let me keep it for a higher purpose—for God and the creative art,' cried Beethoven one day when he had repulsed the appeal of carnal passion. Plato speaks highly of the continence of the Greek athletes. Mahatma Gandhi states in his book *Self Control Versus Self Indulgence* that it is celibacy which has endowed him with mental strength and physical health. He stresses its importance even in ordinary social life. Buddha instructed his lay disciples that in order to put an end to suffering they should practise continence. And none has done greater service to his country and the

world at large, than the continent saints and savants. We may take St. Paul and Sir Isaac Newton as examples. Jesus Christ says, 'And there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake' (*Mathew, XIX: 12*).

OPINIONS OF SOME OPPOSED TO
CONTINENCE

A section of the scientists, having a large following in India and elsewhere, disfavour total abstinence and stigmatize it as a dangerous practice. They argue that sexual glands have an internal secretion which, if generated in large quantities, may produce toxic effects on the system. This, they contend, has been proved by the experiments of Loisel who injected extracts from such sexual glands into other animals and observed the toxic effects. The second argument forwarded by them is that the accumulation of this secretion may prove injurious to the glands themselves, sometimes even leading to their atrophy. Regand and Mingazzini made experiments on guinea pigs and female animals and found serious modifications in the sexual glands of these animals after enforced abstinence and made the above inference. Besides, Kisch and Lorand observed several cases where enforced abstinence resulted in impotence and early disappearance of menstruation. Lastly they think that celibacy may have injurious effects on the nervous system, giving rise to hysteria and neurasthenia. A high percentage of nervous diseases, according to them, is found in old bachelors and spinsters.

Similar views are upheld by many prominent authorities like Munde,

Franklin, and others who maintain that by the disuse of sex-organs, the sex-endocrine glands become functionally impaired. Fowler, Bertillon, and others therefore suggest that sexual activities should be indulged in at regular intervals to promote health. But it is vigorously maintained by other authorities like Rosenau and Lipschutz that continence is quite compatible with health, and that the sex-glands are like the tear-glands and sweat-glands which do not atrophy with disuse.

BENEFITS OF CONTINENCE STOUTLY
MAINTAINED BY SCIENTISTS

Doctor Malchow considers that the preservation of the internal secretion of sex-glands within the body has the greatest physiological value. He holds that the fluids emitted during an orgasm are not waste material, and that their retention would in themselves not be altogether a disadvantage. He is of opinion that such preservation contributes largely towards the acquisition of a strong constitution, both physical and mental, through bio-chemical economy; as the emissions dissociate a large percentage of iron, phosphorus, and calcium from blood. Malchow in his *The Sexual Life* (p. 34) remarks that it is a deep and discriminating knowledge of the psychology of man which requires the elimination of sexuality in order to ensure greater enthusiasm, deeper devotion, and mental concentration for a spiritual cause. In *Natural Therapeutics* (Vol. II, p. 318) it is said that the sex-fluid is the carrier of the life force. During abstinence the sex-fluid with its creative energy is absorbed through the inguinal glands into the organism and increase physical, moral, and

spiritual capacity and energy. It is upheld by the *Encyclopaedia of Physical Culture* (Vol. V, p. 2450) that one part of semen is equal to many parts of pure blood, and that when absorbed again into the system this fluid is transformed into nerve energy. Poehl's experiments with spermine and the latest treatment with active harmonia for producing rejuvenating effects add materially to the above belief.

There are other Western doctors who hold similar views like that of Malchow and advocate that celibacy does prolong life. Dr. Nichols writes: 'It is a medical, a physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life this matter is re-absorbed and goes back into circulation ready to form the finest brain, nerve, and muscular tissue. This matter carried back and diffused through his system makes him manly, strong, brave and heroic. If wasted, it leaves him effeminate, weak, and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated and a prey to sexual irritation, irregular function, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity, and death.' Dr. Nichols further adds that the suspension of the use of generative organ is attended with a notable increase of mental and bodily vigour and spiritual life.

CHASTITY AS A MAJOR VIRTUE

Aldous Huxley, in the last chapter of his famous book *Ends and Means*, while discussing on Ethics, says that a measure of sexual continence is the pre-condition of all forms of mental energy, conative, emotional as well as

cognitive. He emphasizes that chastity is the most major virtue of life, for without it society will lack in energy, and individuals will be condemned to perpetual unawareness, attachment, and animality. Chastity is the necessary pre-condition to any kind of moral life superior to that of an animal.

PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF CONTINENCE

According to the medical science healthy sexual glands insure physical vigour and long life. When these glands function properly, they give out an internal secretion which stimulates and strengthens the organic tissues, specially the brain cells and spinal chord. Celibate life practically demonstrates that continence can keep these glands most healthy and active. Margaret Sanger, the pioneer of the birth-control movement in America, and Dr. McSuttan, an American physician, after discussing with Sri Yogendra, the author of *Yoga as Personal Hygiene*, Bombay, frankly admitted that, if practicable, the Yogic method of active continence is the most ideal solution of all important questions of birth-control.

Experimental evidence of modern science which goes against absolute continence is correct only when celibacy is enforced on brutish people. Such people cannot eliminate sexual impulse and so it poisons their system, deteriorates their sexual glands, and brings on premature senility. It is also true that married life led with moderation and restraint prolongs life and guarantees health. Undoubtedly this is the life suitable for the majority. But there are Yogic methods which increase the absorbing power of the lymphatic

vessels and thereby prevent accumulation of internal secretion of sexual glands and thus avoid its so-called evil consequences. Swami Kuvalayananda of Bombay has experimentally demonstrated that Yogic postures and exercises can perform such miracles. There are, at least, a handful of people free from all sexual urge who are evidently fit for total abstinence and it is they who experience its creative power. The real point at issue in the case of continence is, in the language of psycho-analysis, sublimation. Thousands of other ways of successfully tackling the problem of sublimation has been invented by the religionists of all countries. All, except a queer and quixotic minority, admit that the more continence is practised the better for physical and mental health. The more we yield to sexual impulses, the more we reck and ruin our life and health.

HINDU SCRIPTURES ON
BRAHMACHARYA

Brahmacharya or continence literally means Viryadharana or conservation of sexual energy and retention of semen. In the opinion of Dr. Louis, all eminent physiologists agree that the most precious atoms of the blood enter into the composition of semen. According to the Hindu medical science (Ayurveda), human body is made up of seven Dhatus (elements) such as Rasa (water), Rakta (blood), Mamsa (flesh), Medas (fat), Asthan (bone), Majjan (marrow), and Sukra (semen). So semen is the finest of the seven elements of the human system. The food we eat, the Ayurvedic physicians say, take five days to be digested and turned into

Rasa; Rasa takes five days to be converted into blood; blood takes five days to become flesh; flesh takes five days to become fat; fat takes five days to become bone; bone takes five days to become marrow; and marrow takes five days to become semen. The food therefore eaten by us is gradually drawn into semen, in the course of 35 days after digestion. One drop of semen, say the Ayurvedic texts, is made from forty drops of blood. Retention of semen creates the eighth Dhatus called Ojas in our body. Ojas is the spiritual force and true builder of personality. From this it is perfectly clear that semen is the most precious thing in human system; that is why it is said:

मरणं बिन्दुपातेन जीवनं बिन्दुधारणात् ।
तस्मादतिप्रयत्नेन क्रियतां बिन्दुधारणम् ॥

In other words, retention of semen is life; its loss is death; we should therefore endeavour our level best to conserve every drop of this precious substance. Rightly it has been said by the wise that chastity is life and continence is heaven; but sexuality is death and lust leads to hell. Our scriptures designate Brahmacharya as the 'great vow or ordinance', Mahavrata, because of its unsurpassed benefits and because of the difficulty of achieving perfection in it. Lord Siva says in *Jnana-sankalini Tantra*:

न तपस्तप इत्याहुः ब्रह्मचर्यं तपोलभम् ।
अर्थरेता भवेद यस्तु स देवो न तु मातृषः ॥

That is: Torturing the body is no austerity. Continence is the best austerity. A man of unbroken continence is no man but a God. Sri Ramakrishna says: 'He who can give up the sex idea can spurn the world.' It is said in our scriptures that continence is the negation of

eight kinds of sexuality described in the following verses:

अवर्णं कीर्तनं केति: प्रेक्षणं गुरुभाषणम् ।
सङ्कल्पोऽथवसायकं कियानिष्पन्नेरेवच ॥
एतन्मैथुनमष्टाङ्गं प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ।
विपरीतं ब्रह्मचर्ये अनुष्ठेयं मुमुक्षुभिः ॥

(Thinking, hearing, and talking of the sex; playing with, looking at, and conversing with opposite sex in secret; attempt at, and finally the performance of, the sexual act; these are eight modes of sexuality according to the wise. Continence, which is not doing any of these, should be practised by those who want self-mastery.)

MEANS OF ATTAINING PERFECT
CONTINENCE: A GREAT
SAINT'S COUNSEL

Once I asked a great saint: What is continence? I expected that his reply will consist of some moral rules and regulations; but to my surprise he said: 'Keep your mind as simple, innocent, pure, and unattached as that of a child; and that is continence.' And the same great soul was again asked by me the question how to conquer lust, to which, he said: 'Continence means absence of lust. You cannot conquer lust, for it is the finest form of energy. Energy cannot be destroyed; it is proved by science. You have got to *forget lust*; you have to redirect and transform it. Love, love, love culture, love knowledge. This is the best way to forget lust.'

THE PLACE OF CONTINENCE IN
SOCIOLGY

Sister Nivedita in her *Religion and Dharma* (p. 157) writes: 'Brahmacharya is not only for the monk. Nor it is wholly of the body.

"Abstinence without a great purpose is nothing. It is only the loss of another power." But even Brahmacharya is to be made aggressive. Celibacy is only the passive side of life that sees human beings actively as minds and souls. Marriage itself ought to be in the first place a friendship of the mind. Exchange of thought and communion of struggle is far beyond the offering of comfort, and the one need not exclude the other. The Brahmacharya of the hero makes marriage noble, for it seeks the good of another as an end in itself. In true Brahmacharya is involved the education of women. For a radiant purity comes to its perfect fruition in thought and knowledge and assimilation of experience, and there is Brahmacharya of the wise as well as of the man.' Swami Trigunatita affirms that if any one succeeds in the practice of continence, he will feel that what he was so long enjoying was but an infinitesimal part of that ocean of bliss filtering in through one or other of the sense-organs, and that now through every cell of his body he is enjoying the infinite bliss.

Dr. J. D. Unwin's work *Sex and Culture* is a work of the highest importance on this subject. Unwin's conclusions are based upon an enormous wealth of carefully sifted evidence. He opines that all human societies are in one or other of cultural condition: Zoistic, manistic, deistic, rationalistic. Of these societies the Zoistic displays the least amount of mental and social energy, the rationalistic the most. Investigations show that the societies exhibiting the least amount of energy are those where pre-nuptial continence

is not imposed, and where the opportunities for sexual indulgence in marriage are greatest. The cultural condition of a society rises in exact proportion as it imposes pre-nuptial and post-nuptial restraints upon sexual opportunities.

As the deistic societies insisted on pre-nuptial chastity, conversely all the societies which insisted on pre-nuptial chastity were in the deistic condition. It is the compulsory continence which has caused the thought, reflection, and energy of such society.

The group within the society which allows the greatest continence displays the greatest energy and dominates the whole society; and the dominating group determines the behaviour of the society as a whole. As long as one stratum of a society at least imposes pre-nuptial continence upon its members and limits post-nuptial sexual opportunity by means of strict monogamy, that society as a whole will behave as a civilized society.

The energy produced by social continence starts as expansive energy and results in the society becoming aggressive. Where the rigorous sexual restraint is inherited by a number of generations, the energy becomes productive, i.e., produces higher culture. Where productive energy persists for some time, a factor which Dr. Unwin calls 'human entrophy' comes into play. Human entrophy is the inherent tendency manifested as soon as suitable social conditions are created towards increased refinement and accuracy. No society can display productive social energy unless a new generation inherits a social system under which sexual opportunity is reduced to a

minimum. If such a system be preserved, a richer and yet richer tradition will be created, refined by human entrophy.

Sometimes a man has been heard to declare that he wishes both to enjoy the advantages of high culture and to abolish compulsory continence. The inherent nature of human organism however seems to be such that these desires are incompatible, even contradictory. Any human society is free to choose either to display great energy or to enjoy sexual freedom; the evidence is that it cannot do both for more than one generation. Dr. Unwin suggests that modern world is confronted with two alternatives; it may choose to be continent and energetic or it may prefer sexual indulgence to mental and social energy. In this connection Aldous Huxley remarks that addiction degrades only the addict. Addiction cannot be destroyed by satiation; but tends, if indulged, to become 'demoniac possession'. In the *Sayings of Brother Giles* it is recorded that amongst all other virtues he would set the virtue of chastity first, because sweet chastity contains all perfection in itself. But there is no other virtue which can even be perfect without chastity.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman even as a glass gives a perfect image of an object when its back is painted with mercury solution. Manu advises the practice of Brahmacharya in order to increase the force of character. In the *Mahabharata* we read sage Narada asking Sukadeva to be

the controller of his senses without marrying.

THE TASK BEFORE YOUNG INDIA

Without continence the younger generation of our country are getting more and more physically weak and mentally imbecile. The Report of Indian Universities say that seventy-five per cent of the students are more or less diseased. One of the causes of this appalling state of their health, in the opinion of our leading medical men, is the lack of continence. An ex-Inspector of a College of the Calcutta University, while making an appeal to prevent the progress of venereal diseases among the students, observed that for sometime past he had been noticing with increasing sorrow a gradual deterioration among our students in both their physique and morals. When he inspected the Carmichael Medical College of Calcutta last, he was informed on unimpeachable medical authority that seventy to seventy-five per cent of the venereal cases treated in the out-door dispensaries of Calcutta are contracted by students of High School classes and Colleges (Report dated 5th June, 1930, Senate House).

It is not however too late to mend. Mahatma Gandhi declares that after twenty years of self-indulgence he has made extraordinary improvement of his body and mind only through

self-control. He further holds that had he observed self-control during those two decades of self-indulgence, he cannot imagine now how much more powerful he would have been. If we now start to believe in the creative power of continence, we can not only rebuild our individual life, but also our collective life in a manner unprecedented in the past.

CONCLUSION

There is a passage in an Upanishad which has been interpreted by a great savant to mean: The realization of the highest Truth is possible only through observance of absolute continence; even without undergoing any other spiritual practice. Brahmacharya alone is sufficient to take one to that end. The same idea is emphasized by a mediaeval Jain saint when he wrote:

प्राणभूतं चरित्रस्य परब्रह्मैककारणम् ।
समाचरन् ब्रह्मचर्यं पूजितैरपि पूज्यते ॥

Brahmacharya is the most vital thing in the founding of character; it is the sole means of attaining the Supreme Truth; he who practises Brahmacharya is worshipped by those who are honoured in the world. May the Indian youths believe in the creative power of continence and start from now to practise this foremost virtue is our constant prayer to the Almighty.

How much can you study? What results can you get by mere reasoning? First try to realise God. Have faith in the words of your Guru (spiritual teacher), and perform some good work. If you have not found a Guru, a true spiritual master, earnestly pray to God. He will show you what He is like. What can you know by reading books? Before you enter a market-place, you can hear only a loud confused uproar; but when you go near, all confusion will vanish and you will distinguish what each one is calling.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE RIGHT APPROACH TO THE BHAGAVADGITA

By K. Guru Dutt

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THE *Bhagavadgita* is undoubtedly the most popular among the Hindu scriptures and is pre-eminent for the special appeal it has for the modern educated man. The reason for this is not far to seek: for, within its all too brief compass of seven hundred verses it covers the whole gamut of human endeavour and spiritual aspiration. The popularity however is not without its own drawbacks; for it has led to a certain vulgarization of the teaching, to suit the prejudices of the average man who is only too prone to believe that there is, and can be, nothing which he cannot judge and understand. For the man in the street, the teaching must be such that 'he who runs may read' and grasp. But the *Gita* does not lend itself to such rough handling and refers again and again to its own teachings as a profound secret, as even a casual reader cannot but be aware. This aspect is however likely to be passed over lightly or even ignored. A few examples may therefore be of value in stressing the point. Thus, in the ninth chapter, the doctrine taught is designated *rajavidya rajaguhyam* (IX:2)—the kingly science and kingly secret—and is characterized as a profound secret—*guhyatamam* (IX:1). In the eleventh chapter, Arjuna refers to the teaching as profound beyond measure—*paramam guhyam* (IX:1). Towards the end in the eighteenth chapter, the Supreme Lord himself speaks of the wisdom disclosed as profounder than profundity itself—

guhyad guhyataram (XVIII: 63); and again in the next verse as the profoundest secret of all—*sarva-guhyatamam*; and finally Sanjaya alludes to it as *guhyam param* (XVIII: 75)—the ultimate mystery. It is needless to multiply instances; but it would appear as if the significance of the *Gita* is not all on the surface; that it does not 'wear its heart on its sleeve for daws to peck at.'

II

It would be a mistake to think of this emphasis on secrecy as an undemocratic device intended to perpetuate a mechanical esotericism for keeping the higher knowledge as a closed preserve for any classes or individuals. It aims rather at the fostering of a reverent mode of approach and the realization of the limitations of the human understanding, at the outset. It is an indication of the difficulties inherent in the topic itself, and yet an encouragement to the earnest seeker. It is an affirmation of the realization that only the person who has acquired fitness can hope for those intuitions which reveal the nature of the Supreme Reality, that what is essentially subtle cannot be grabbed on the plane of the gross, and that for its appreciation the prerequisite is not cleverness or intellectual subtlety, but principally a fineness of the heart (*chitta suddhi*) which alone is the foundation of all *jnana*, as expounded in the thirteenth chapter in the verses (5-11), beginning with *amanitvam*.

III

The difficulty also lies in the fact that language is an imperfect medium for communicating the highest experiences, and that the same words may not convey the same meaning to all readers, nor even to the same reader at different times. This was one of the earliest discoveries of the Hindu mind and is beautifully expressed in the hymn in the *Rigveda* (X: 6.3) where Speech or language as the vehicle of *jnana* is described as follows: 'To one she presents herself as a loving wife to her husband . . . but another wanders with an illusion that is barren, bearing Speech that is without fruit, without flowers.' Referring to the Supreme Self, which is the subject of enquiry, the *Gita*, itself says: *srutvapy enam veda na chaiva kaschit*—'still others, though hearing, do not understand it at all' (II: 29). Throughout the whole range of Hindu sacred literature, this idea repeats itself: whether, for example, in the *Upanishad*, where words are said to recoil from Brahman, *yato vacho nivartante*: or in the *Mahabharata* when the subtlety of the nature of *Dharma* is stressed. As the *Kena Upanishad* has it, Brahman is not what is expressed by words, but that by which words themselves are manifested and understood: *yad vacha'nabhyuditam, yena vach abhyudyate*. This aspect seems to have impressed the old seekers so much that the very word *Upanishad* was taken to signify a secret or

rahasyam; and the word *Upanishad* has been, it will be recollected, freely applied by later tradition to the *Gita* which e.g., is referred to as *gilasu upanishatsu* during the orthodox reading or *parayana*.

IV

It is instructive to note that after the Great War, Arjuna questioned Sri Krishna once again, saying that he had forgotten the truths of the *Gita* which had been expounded to him in the heat and excitement of battle and that he wanted to hear them afresh in a peaceful mood. Sri Krishna, however, reproached him for having taken the matter so light-heartedly and said that the *Gita* had been revealed by Him in a mood of unusual Yogic exaltation, which He could not Himself recapture, and proceeded to give him a secondary exposition, intended although feebly to reinforce the old teaching. This episode occurs in the *Anugita* chapter of the 'Asvamedha parvan' of the *Mahabharata*. The conclusion that may be drawn from the foregoing is that the *Gita* demands at the very start from its readers that humble and receptive mood which the *Gita* would inculcate in an earnest seeker approaching a knower of Brahman: *Tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattvadarsinah*. (IV: 34). Utter humility and devoted service have to be combined with intellectual curiosity before the *Gita* will yield its secret.

Some of the saints are without a mark and without an attribute, and the perfection of a state, and the utmost degree to which saints may attain is to be without an attribute and without a mark. It is said, 'He who has no mark, his mark are We.'—*Jami*.

SOME ILLUMINATING UTTERANCES OF KABIR

By S. L. N. Srivastava, M.A.

A. THE TRUE GOAL

'O ye aspirant! leave aside wrangling,
And take up the path leading to the true goal, the Supreme Brahman (*para-brahma*) which is unique;
(In that one cannot trace) Maha-deo or Muhammad or Hari or Hazrat,
Or Adam (the first-born man) or Brahma (the personal creator), or light
or shade;
Or the eight thousand prophets or the eighty thousand *munis*;
Sun, moon, and stars are not there, fish or turtle either;
Veda, Koran and Smritis are not there, no (grandeur of) an earthly empire;
No *banga*, *namaz* and *kalama*, no Rama and no Khuda;¹
No beginning, end or middle is there, no mind, fire, air or water;
Eighty-four lacs of living beings are not there, no speech² is there;
Sayeth Kabir, listen O aspirant, push thy enquiry further:³
Whence is the self-complete Brahman, and what causeth the world-
appearance ?'

B. THE NATURE OF MAYA

'I have understood the nature of the enchantment of the Divine Enchanter.
With a beat of drum He spreads out the magic show, and then gathers it
all away.
In this magic show of the Divine, this Mayic creation, have lost their way
the sages, gods and men;
(Maya) threw her spell over all, keeping them all captive in Her house;
none could have the knowledge within him.
The Magician is real, the magic show is false—so think the Sadhus.
Sayeth Kabir: as one thinketh, so he doeth.'⁴

¹ Evidently, Kabir takes the words Rama and Khuda as sectarian appellations of God on the lips of ignorant Hindus and Moslems who construe the linguistic difference as denoting two separate entities.

² In the original we have *sakti sabda na bani*. Kabir's own poems and utterances have been classed under these three heads, *sakti*, *sabda*, and *bani*. Probably Kabir means to say that his own utterances (*qua* words) are as inadequate to communicate the Supreme Brahman as the words of the Veda or the Koran.

³ Further, that is, beyond the Mayic world. Kabir suggests that as everything that we know and talk about in the world of Maya is *non est* in the final experience of *Para Brahman*, it is no use wrangling about Mayic objects. Ultimately only two things remain to be discussed, Brahman and the world-appearance. So one might ask (if he had an inveterate fondness for wrangling): whence came Brahman and what causes the world-appearance?

⁴ Meaning thereby that one who takes the Mayic creation to be real has an attachment for it.

C. THE PRACTICE OF TRUE RELIGION

'When Love and Renunciation flow together like the Ganges and the Jamuna,

Then alone is there a sacred bathing place which can give the boon of *Prayaga*.'

'All things visible are destructible; all things nameable are evanescent. Kabir has put his reliance only on that *Tattva* which his *Sadguru* has shown him.'

'Wouldst thou really benefit from the knowledge imparted to thee by thy Guru, then lay down thy head as an offering unto him. (That is, have no idea of identifying yourself with the body). Many dull-witted persons have sunk themselves in the mire of worldliness by retaining the sense of identity with the body.'

'Sayeth Kabir: he is verily great who adores humility and poverty and has respect and regard for everybody. A man of such a nature has true high-mindedness.'

'When thou thinkest of God, speak no word with thy mouth. Close the outward door (of the senses) and open the door within (of meditation).'

'Disputation is deadly poison; speaking has many evil consequences. Better it is to practise silence, than to hear with indulgence what others say and to meditate on the unfathomable world.'

'All those who know (the true nature of the *tattva*) will be unanimous (and will not dispute about it); as for those who do not know, it is better to be silent with them. They will talk many things. What use is there in wrangling with them?'

'So attune thy mind to the contemplation of God as the deer to the music of the *vina*. It will not withdraw its attention from the music although it may die in doing so.'

'So fix thy mind on the thought of God as the pauper on his coin. He will never forget it and will every moment be looking to its security.'

'So fix thy mind on the thought of God as the woman carrying a jar of water on her head fixes her attention on the jar. She moves about and walks about, but her attention is ever fixed on balancing the jar.'

By the dissolution of the self, one gets God, but by the dissolution of (the thought of) God, one loses everything. Divine love is an indescribable phenomenon; who will put his trust in it, if I speak about it ?'

D. THE SILENT ENJOYMENT OF DIVINE ECSTASY

Why will he speak whose heart is brimming over with ecstasy ?⁵

A man getting a piece of diamond will keep it in all secrecy and not expose it so often to other men's gaze.

The weighing balance has an inclined rod only till the object is not equal to the weight; once equal, where is the need of weighing further?

When the woman selling wine becomes love-stricken, she quaffs off the wine straightway, and measures not its quantity before doing so.

The swan, once lodged in the *Manasarovara*, will not like to dwell in small pools of water.

Within thee dwelleth thy Lord, why peer with thine eyes outward?

Listen! O brother aspirant! sayeth Kabir: in an atom's⁶ space I have found the Lord lurking.

That is the one great first step,—the real desire for the ideal. Everything comes easy after that. That the Indian mind found out. There, in India, men go to any length to find truth. But here, in the West, the difficulty is, that everything is made so easy. It is not truth, but development, that is the great aim. The struggle is the great lesson. Mind you, the great benefit in this life is struggle. It is through that we pass,—if there is any road to Heaven, it is through hell. Through hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has wrestled with circumstance, and has met death, a thousand times death on the way, but nothing daunted, has struggled forward again and again,—then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own Self, and nothing else, for what is there to compare to my own Self? Can a bag of gold be the ideal of my soul? Certainly not! My soul is the highest ideal that I have. Realising my own real nature is the one goal of my life.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

⁵ Cf. Sri Rama-krishna's beautiful saying—when a jug is being filled with water, there is the noise of *tap tap* only till it is not full; when it is full the noise ceases. So also there is verbal disputation about God so long as God is not realized.

⁶ Literally—in the space of a sesamum seed.

THE PRIEST-PROPHET

By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.

ONE of the many bewildering truths that History reveals to us is that the priest and the prophet have ever been at war.

This truth is really bewildering, because, normally, we have every reason to expect that these two functionaries should work in co-ordination, rather than in opposition.

The work of both the prophet and the priest is related to the betterment of the status of humanity on the moral plane. The mission of one seems but to be identical with that of the other.

And yet what is it that is at the root of this singular phenomenon of the priest and the prophet crusading between themselves?

A prophet's arrival is to society the coming in of a refreshing season. The prophet rings out the old and rings in the new. He rebuilds and recasts; infuses new blood into tired limbs; throws out the worn-out and the useless; and effects a general cleaning-up and a toning-up. He broadcasts ideas. He never destroys, but always fulfils; never weakens, but ever makes the ill good, and the good better.

The secret of the prophet's success is not to be looked for solely in the excellency of his teachings or in the loftiness of his mission. Much of his success is due to the brilliance of his personality. Thousands adore him and are drawn to him, because he is irresistible. But in order to ensure that the prophet's mission survives his physical exit from the

earth, the prophet himself or his disciples are obliged to institutionalize his message.

Institutionalization of a prophet's mission is almost the only way of preserving it for posterity. And yet in the very process of being institutionalized the mission passes through its first stage of decadence. Therefore arises the paradox of the Church or the Sangha being at the same time the mirror and the distorts of the Christ or the Buddha. (Church, Sangha, Christ, Buddha—these terms are used here not in their restricted specific sense, but in their broad, basic sense. Church or Sangha stands for any institutionalized religion. Christ or Buddha stands for any Saviour).

The priest is the custodian of institutionalized prophet-dom. He is a very necessary personage. Through ritual, mythology and philosophy he contributes to the perpetual upkeep of the prophet's message.

But all things on earth decay, and need touching up. This is true of even a prophet's message. The prophet is not to blame for it; for the changing needs of society require the readjustment of his words and the refashioning of his work. When a new prophet arises to set right things and give fresh vitality to his predecessor's mission by removing from it the weeds that have grown round it, priestcraft comes into collision with him.

A scientist makes a discovery. It is patented by a layman. When a later scientist wants to improve upon

the discovery by removing from it certain errors which were originally unnoticed or have subsequently grown round it, the layman would not permit any improvement. He prefers the patented discovery with its errors to the new truer discovery. A man puts up a fence to guard a sapling. The sapling grows to gigantic proportions, but he would not remove the fence. He even fails to see the need for its removal. This is exactly what priestcraft does.

Priestcraft starts well, but time brings dust on it. It gathers vested interests, and the desire for self-preservation and the fear that any change would undermine its status induces it to shy even at wholesome changes to the organization of which it is the custodian. It therefore mistakes a saviour for a heretic, and kicks the one whom it must garland. A prophet's message is fundamentally flexible, elastic, and in consequence capable of endless growth. But rigidity is the chief trait of priestcraft. The relentless adherence to what was once wholesome is priestcraft's main purpose.

Priestcraft suffers from another defect too. When a spiritual message is institutionalized it needs materialistic props. A church needs money, patronage, influence. For a time these props are kept subservient to the main spiritual aim. But later on greater emphasis comes to be laid on the means rather than on the end. And worldliness holds sway in the temple of the Lord, and the Saviour has no place in his own mission!

Where however priests are free from the taint of selfishness and materialism, they are sincere and well-meaning even when they collide with a

prophet. But they are blind to the supreme need for frequent change in the economy of the human universe.

Therefore while prophets save religion, the priests, often moved by the same desire, ruin it. The priests are the agents of stagnation, and the prophets are the liberators.

Every great seer, be he ancient or modern, has had to contend against priestcraft. Sometimes priestcraft even succeeds in crucifying the prophet, but ultimately it is the crucified prophet that wins the world's homage.

This conflict between priest and prophet however makes us sad, for it represents a wastage of human energy. We feel that if only the priest and the prophet do not pull in different ways much good will result, much agony will be avoided, and quicker and more wide-spread benefits will accrue to humanity. Succeeding prophets only fulfil one another, they never undo, but the priests raise much needless dust.

II

Perhaps the one thing that deeply strikes students of the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the infinite variety of his phases. His entire greatness is incomprehensible. Each one gets a glimpse and is satisfied. Each bathes in the ocean of his glory and is refreshed. But who can fathom all his depths? Who can scale the heights of all his peaks? The husband, the teacher, the devotee, the preacher, the philosopher, the spiritual aspirant of any and every type, the social reformer, the ascetic, the trainer of human beings, the artist—all these find in him the ideal of their path. And the more we study him, the more light are we able

to derive from him. He gives, ever gives—in proportion to the enquirer's need, in accordance with his bent. No one can say: This is all of Ramakrishna.

Swami Guaneswarananda in his admirable little book *Ramakrishna, the Man and the Power*, published as a Ramakrishna Birth Centenary Memorial Edition in 1936) says in his preface: 'It is self-evident that, in a dissertation of this nature, there are bound to be many phases which may disappoint and offend staunch devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Before them the author humbly kneels for forgiveness and pleads that Ramakrishna is a vast book and should not be considered as only the chapter which a particular group or individual has devotedly accepted. New and newer pages of this great volume are still to be opened and comprehended.' In no other way can we explain the strange fact of a man who spent his life in a temple near Calcutta, ruling at the present day the hearts of thousands of men and women beyond the Indian borders—men and women whose modes of life and of thought, whose social customs and ideals are entirely different from those of India. This simple ascetic of Bengal who knew no language other than his native tongue is talking today to the peoples of the world,—but hush! is not the language of the spirit universal?

Swami Ghanananda has made a fine study of Sri Ramakrishna in his book *Sri Ramakrishna: His Unique Message* (also a Centenary Memorial Edition—1937). Speaking about the Paramahansa's message to man, he refers to the sevenfold harmony of which the great Master was the

exponent and the exemplar. The seven aspects of the message of harmony are: Harmony between religion and religion, between philosophy and philosophy, between the various paths of spiritual disciplines, between the Personal and the Impersonal aspects of God, between the different types of super consciousness which are the goals of different forms of spiritual disciplines, between sects and denominations of religions, and between the duties of man belonging to different Varnas and Ashramas (divisions of society and stages of life).

To these we may in reverential homage add an eighth—the harmony between the priest and the prophet.

In other words, just as Sri Ramakrishna's life has thrown light on many problems of spirituality, religion and philosophy, and also on many aspects of man's individual and organizational endeavours, his life is a standing proof of the possibility, and a commanding call to men to realize, in the interests of common welfare, the necessity, of the priest-prophet harmony.

III

Sri Ramakrishna never preached what he was not. With him word meant effort and effort meant realization. If therefore he conveyed to humanity the lesson of the priest-prophet harmony, he was in himself a priest-prophet, a glorious blend of two seemingly conflicting entities.

That Sri Ramakrishna was a prophet par excellence is accepted on all sides. His astounding renunciation, his stupendous realizations, the extraordinarily wide area over which he, as a *sadhaka*, roamed, his power to heal and to save, the multiplicity

of his modes of spiritual endeavour, the excellence of his teachings, his power to conquer men and transmute base metal into shining gold—all these make him a prince among prophets.

And by profession he was a temple-priest. He lived the greater part of his life in a room in the Dakshineswar Kali temple. But he was a prince among priests too. A few examples will make these things clear.

While being a priest Sri Ramakrishna eschewed the narrowness, the bigotry, the tendency to care more for the letter than the spirit of the law, the greed for position and influence, the quality of preserving the husk and losing sight of the grain, that are the nominal characteristics of a priest.

The very story of his employment as a priest is revealing. When Mathur Nath, the proprietor, wanted to fix him up as a temple-priest, Sri Ramakrishna at first avoided him, and agreed to take service in the temple only if another was appointed to take charge of the valuable ornaments of the deity. Normally no priest would care to enter service if he could not proudly manage the temple jewels also.

When his brother took service in the temple constructed by a low-caste lady, Sri Ramakrishna at first protested saying that such a step would taint the family's honour, but when he saw that the foundress of the temple and his brother were actuated by very noble motives, he was able to waive his objections and live in the temple. In fact now we know him more as the Man of Dakshineswar than by any other epithet.

Years before he came to the temple he showed his wise liberality of outlook when at the time of his *upanayanam* he, contrary to orthodox custom, accepted alms from a blacksmith woman. Even as a boy he showed that while conventions and hoary injunctions are wholesome they must always yield to the demands of sincerity. The blacksmith woman's love for him made her a nearer relative to him than the relatives of the family from one of whom, custom said, he should take his first alms. How much of significance is contained in this what would appear to one as merely the foolish obstinacy of an unknowing boy!

One day an image of Krishna in the Dakshineswar temple was dropped in transit and a leg was broken. The pandits advised its being thrown into the Ganges and the installation of a new image. But Sri Ramakrishna's solution was characteristic. 'If a son-in-law of the Rani fractured his leg would she discard him and put another in his stead? Would she not rather arrange for his treatment? Why not do the same thing here? Let the image be repaired and worshipped as before.' And he himself helped to repair the image. To the other pandits the image was but an image and no more. To Ramakrishna it was a living person.

The most significant fact about Sri Ramakrishna as an example of the priest-prophet harmony is that he became a prophet through being a priest. Nearer the church, farther from God—is a proverb containing a good deal of truth. And perhaps because religion becomes a profession with priests they very often are the least benefited by the influence of

that noble faculty, religion. What do we find in Sri Ramakrishna's case? Without help or guide from books or preceptors he plunged into the search for Reality from his post of a priest, and the image he was employed to worship was the channel through which he attained his first God-vision. All this is easily said. But only deep imagination will help us to have a faint glimpse of the marvellous nature of Sri Ramakrishna's first realization. How indeed can words ever give an idea of the enormity of his thirst for God, of his absolute mergence in the pursuit after the Supreme, of the original way in which he, like a modern Prahlada, compelled, by the intensity of his mere longing, God to become visible through an image? He started as a priest, but he did that work to thoroughness, and the priest ended by becoming a prophet. Is there not a lesson here for priests—the lesson that far from being the policemen of religion (guarding the temple, distributing offerings, etc.) they must really equip themselves to be the guides to God head?

In fact Sri Ramakrishna's life, if studied from a particular angle, appears to have only one main purpose, *viz.*, the reforming of the institution of priesthood and the redeeming of that institution from many weaknesses. So thoroughly did the Paramahansa fulfil every phase of his mission that each in turn appears to be his dominant contribution to human welfare, according to the stand we take. Let us take his practice of the Tantrikasadhana for example. He proved that contrary to the usual practice or idea, the Tantrika rites could be

practised without wine or sex-indulgence. Many of the Tantrika exercises are so dangerous as to lead to moral degradation. But Sri Ramakrishna went through them all utterly untainted. He never partook of wine, and regarded all women as the Mother.

Priests frequently suffer from the idea that they have a proprietary right over their organization, and over even the God of their sect! So they want to shield their God and their flock from all outside influences likely to disturb His glory or their faith! Sri Ramakrishna on the other hand opened the doors wide so that all winds might fashion him. A devoted Hindu worshipper of the Mother Kali as he was, he practised Islam and Christianity, not merely intellectually grasped their teachings, but actually realized them. He was by turns a Muslim and a Christian, for when he practised a particular faith he entirely identified himself with it. He was a whole-hogger. What would an ordinary Hindu priest have thought of him when he used to repeat the name of Allah, wear his cloth in the fashion of the Muslims, and recite the Namaz regularly and when he did not salute Hindu gods? The priest would have thought that his case was hopeless, because he had seceded from his own religion. But to Ramakrishna this practice meant fulfilment, more of fulfilment as it were. For he was not born to be a priest of this or that faith. He was a true priest of God, and was, and had to be, at home in every faith.

That Sri Ramakrishna was a super-priest can be illustrated by yet another example. Readers of his life

will recall to mind how seeing Ramakrishna being very particular about getting his share of the temple offerings a disciple concluded that it was the result of the continuance of the priestly instinct of acquisition in even so advanced a saint as the Paramahansa, and how, divining the thought of the disciple, Sri Ramakrishna explained his act by pointing out that the portion that came to him was utilized by pure souls while other priests abused the temple offerings they got as their wages, and that the share he got served in some measure to fulfil the objects of the temple-founders.

The soul of things, not the form alone, always mattered to Sri Ramakrishna. He was able to detect the hypocrisy that lay hidden under external conformity to the laws of religion. He was also able to touch and rouse genuine spirituality that was often covered by superficial heterodoxy. The case of Girish Chandra Ghosh, 'The redeemed sinner and converted comedian', is an instance in point. No priest would ever have tolerated Girish. But Sri Ramakrishna accepted him and saved him. 'The Master Artist, which Ramakrishna was, presented to the world through the character of Girish, the astounding and shocking truth that spiritual greatness does not always appear clothed in the conventional standard of morality and good conduct.'

Yes, those whom priests would shun, the prophets accept. Sri Ramakrishna, who like other prophets, had his own share of criticism from ununderstanding men who found fault with because he did not show sufficient moral abhorrence of prosti-

tutes! Referring to this charge, Swami Vivekananda in his review of Prof. Max Muller's book on Sri Ramakrishna says, 'Again another charge put forward is that he did not show sufficient moral abhorrence of prostitutes—to this the Professor's rejoinder is very, very sweet indeed; he says that in this charge Ramakrishna does not stand alone among the founders of religion. Ah! How sweet are these words—they remind one of the prostitute Ambapali, the object of Lord Buddha's divine grace, and of the Samaritan woman who won the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Sri Ramakrishna's 'illiteracy' in the sense of book-learning, which he had very little was a protest against the priestly characteristic of giving extraordinary prominence to mere book-knowledge.

To the priests of the world, the message of the priest of Dakshineswar was this: 'Do not care for doctrines or dogmas or sects or churches or temples. They count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality . . . Criticize no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Religion does not mean words or names or sects, but it means spiritual realization. Only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others.'

An incident, funny in spite of its tragic significance, in the life of Sri Ramakrishna shows that he too had to pay the price of being a prophet, in the form of molestation at the hands of priesthood. Chandra Haldar, the family priest of Mathur Nath, was jealous of Ramakrishna because the Paramahansa seemed to claim

the rich Mathur's entire affection. So one day when the Master was alone and in a mood of absorption he pushed and kicked. Sri Ramakrishna, however, kept the incident a secret from Mathur till the priest was dismissed for some other misconduct. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'—this is ever the attitude of an oppressed prophet.

The divergence between profession and practice which is the mark of the priest is clearly brought out in the following incident. One day when Ramakrishna was eating the leavings of beggars, considering them as manifestations of the Lord, Haladhari, the temple-priest, remarked: 'What are you doing? You have lost caste. Now who will marry your daughter in future?' Haladhari was a Vedantin, and Sri Ramakrishna came down on him like a tempest. 'You rogue!' he said, 'Do you not always quote from the scriptures to say that the world is an illusion and God is the only reality, and glibly recommend people to look upon all things as Brahman? And you think that I, like you, would preach that the world is a myth and at the same time have children? Fie upon your knowledge of the scriptures.'

This small incident throws a flood of light on the fundamental weakness of priesthood.

IV

If, as can easily be proved, every event in Sri Ramakrishna's life is not without significance, his taking up the profession of a temple-priest must also surely have its meaning. May it not be that this brilliant prophet chose to be a priest all the same, in order to give to the world a practical example of an ideal priest, to restore the institution of priesthood to its true and destined sphere of being the guardian and regulator, along safe channels, of the religious impulse of man, to show that there is at bottom no unbridgeable barrier between the priest and the prophet, that in fact the priest is but a soldier in the prophet's army? And may it not perhaps be the will of Providence that in the years to come the mission of the Priest of Dakshineswar will bring about a wholesome change in the aims and activities of the churches and Ashrams all over the world and transform the priest from being society's curse into being its guiding star?

Yes. Sri Ramakrishna, the Priest, deserves reverential study.

Work is necessary for God-vision. Once I was passing by a pool, the surface of which was covered by a thick scum. I saw a poor man pushing the scum to one side to look at the water. This showed me that if you wish to see the water, you must push aside the scum. That act of pushing is like the work which removes all the impurities of the heart. Then God is visible. Concentration, meditation, repetition of the Name of the Lord, charitable works, self-sacrifice, these will remove the scum of ignorance which covers the water of Divinity in the pool of the heart.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

THE FIRST TOUCH OF THE DIVINE

By T. K. Mahadeva

Gadadhar sweet, the simple parents' stay,
Whose glistening smile didst o'er their hearts hold sway,
And, like the sun that drives the mists of morn,
Didst drive the griefs that pricked their hearts like thorn;
Gadadhar young, scarce two and ten years old,
One summer day, when th' earth was bathed in gold,
When, bright salubrity, the Lord of Day
Poured forth upon the fields and village gay;
Gadadhar bold, with eager steps he walked
To meet his mates, to hear the tales they talked:
His gait recalled the Cow-herd God of yore.
His simple cloth a handful of puffed rice bore.
The sky was clear, the sun was bright and warm:
He watched the scene; when lo! dark clouds of storm,
With lightning speed spread o'er the whole expanse.
Awestruck he stood with deep and fixed glance.
The sky so clear, the sun so warm and bright,
That filled his heart with unalloyed delight,
Now seemed no more; and in their stead he saw
Dark clouds—so dark they filled his heart with awe,
As thus he watched grim Nature's play aghast,
A flight of cranes as white as milk flew past.
The white against the black! Ah what a sight!
It sent his, raptured mind on upward flight
Gadadhar's fixed gaze grew dim and blank;
His knees gave way and on the ground he sank;
He fell unconscious on the narrow track;—
Scattered lay his simple meal—alack!
His mind soared high; it passed the mortal plane.
Beyond it sped—beyond thought's subtile main,
Where neither I nor My save but SAT IS
And beamed his face divine with smiling bliss.

MAN IN THE WELL

By Bhakti Chaitanya

THOUGH Man learns from observation that death is common to all living beings, the perception of this fact makes little difference in the life of almost all. Old age, disease, and other calamities produce no change in human conduct, save that they temporarily make him feel a little dispassion for worldly possessions, perhaps, till one gets over his mental depression. Man, inspite of all the hard blows he receives from Nature, still continues to enjoy the pleasures of the senses. He is blind to the sublime beauty of spiritual life which puts an end to his insatiable craving for worldly things.

Our Puranic literature is rich in ethical and spiritual ideals. We read in them several dialogues and stories explaining the utter worthlessness of lower life. Reading these beautiful legends and parables, we are constantly reminded of the profound truth of spiritual life. Take, for instance, the marvellous parable of *The Man in the Well* narrated in the 'Striparvan' of the *Mahabharata* which has become part of world-literature. A Jain and a Buddhist version of this parable are also found. Winternitz informs us that it found its way into the Buddhist-Christian work of legends *Barlaam and Josaph* as well as the famous fable book *Kalilag and Damnag*, and wandered all over the world serving for the edification of all. Further we understand that the Persian Sufi Poet Jalal-ed-Din Rumi translated it into Persian from which P. Ruckert rendered it into a German poem, which is familiar to every child in Germany.

Once upon a time a Brahmana in the course of his itinerary entered into a dense jungle infested with lions, tigers and other beasts of prey. The very appearance of the forest with all its wild life frightened him. In mortal terror he ran about hither and thither, attempting in vain for an exit. At last he saw to his great horror that the entire forest was enveloped on all sides by traps and five-headed dragons which rose to the sky like mountain peaks. A horrid-looking woman of huge size embraced the forest with her arms. In the middle of this forest there was a large well covered with brush-wood and creepers. The Brahmana, while walking, fell into this deep well, and was caught up in the branches of a creeper. He was hanging there topsy-turvy like a big jack-fruit held by its stalk. His trouble was not yet over with this critical position; and yet another, even greater, catastrophe awaited him there. At the bottom of the well he perceived a mammoth serpent, and near the tree which was at the top of the well he saw a huge and mighty elephant in rut with six faces and twelve feet approaching towards him. In the branches of the tree that shaded the well, swarms of bees of all kinds and shapes were buzzing around their hives and preparing delicious honey. Black serpents and white mice were gnawing the creeper on which he hung. Even though death stared at the face the Brahmin was swallowing the drops of honey dripping continually from above greedily smacking his lips. His craving for honey could never be satisfied.

The terrible forest full of dragons, giants, mighty serpents, mad elephants and gnawing mice, was quite enough to frighten anyone; but the Brahmana was still avariciously swallowing the honey as he was not at all fearful of death.

Dhritarashtra, the blind king of Kauravas, who was listening to this narrative of human misery, was very much puzzled. He asked: 'Indeed it is true that the unfortunate Brahmana was in a very wretched position; but what made him to linger in that undesirable state? What is that state? Pray tell me if there is any way out?' Vidura, the very embodiment of wisdom, explained the parable in the following manner:

This dense forest is the Samsara, the place of our transmigratory existence; the carnivorous beasts of prey are the diseases; the repulsive giantess is old age which destroys youth and beauty; the well is the human body; the mighty serpent at the bottom of the well is Time, the god of Death who snatches away all the beings; the slender creeper on which the man was hanging, is the hope of life; the elephant with six faces and twelve-feet is the year with its six seasons and twelve months; the white mice and black serpents are the days and nights which diminish the life-time of man; the bees which are preparing the honey are the passions and the honey-drops are the sensual pleasures. Human beings remain

always intoxicated by sensual pleasures, and only the wise men knowing this truth become immune from the bacteria of sense-pestilence.

Just as travellers, in ordinary life, while undertaking a journey, halt at different stations, the non-enlightened souls also take birth again and again as if to halt in contradistinction to those released souls who are freed once for all from this transmigratory existence. The forest of Samsara is in a way the path to perfection. The pilgrims of life who are dull and careless are attacked by virulent diseases, mental and physical, and continue to live in Samsara with all its evils and dangers. But those wise pilgrims who love all beings seeing their Self in all, annihilate this greed for continuation of life and reach the eternal abode of happiness.

Trishna (craving) does not grow old with old age and does not die with death. Rightly the *Mahabharata* reminds us that just as the tailor with his needle passes the thread through a cloth, so the thread of Samsara is passed through the needle of Trishna. The old king Yayathi after enjoying pleasures of the senses for a thousand years in his second youth became aware of the truth that desire is never quenched by satisfying the desires, but it only increases further as fire is kindled by butter poured into it. But he who desires nothing and loves all attains the state of calmness.

SIN

By Ram Ram

In the hours of meditation, I asked my Guru what is meant by sin, and he stated as follows: I shall explain to you what sin is as understood by the higher minds. A sin is an act or thought which takes you away from God. All the animal instincts of man tend to make him follow the natural bent of his desires, and these desires are often gratified by injuring other creatures. His hunger is gratified by injuring many creatures. To satisfy the sex instinct too at times harm is done to others. Civilization has placed great restrictions upon the crude exhibition of these desires. If a man lives in the constant gratification of these desires merely, he is living a low life; for every-day experiences keep him down on a low plane of life. All these animal propensities, constitute the sinful nature of man. The soul tries to drag him upwards from the mire of this sinful condition and to the extent he moves along the higher lines, he is leaving sin behind. It is sin not merely to covet another's wife, but also to be infatuated with one's own wife. The greater sins which injure other people alone are notably marked as sins. To the spiritual vision, every desire that ties a man down to his physical cravings is sin. The only difference is between sins that injure others and the sins that injure oneself merely. There is no blackness attached to any act which makes it a sin, independently of the person. A man may be appearing to be committing a sin, when cutting another man's legs, but he might be the doctor saving his life. Every act has to be understood by reference to the inner

motive impelling the act. A man may actually destroy a child, which is suffering agonies of torture, and there is no sin in the act which is meant to save the child only. You have therefore to see the person and decide if there is a sin with reference to his personality. A great Saint who does not believe in the social orders appropriating property to each person, might take some property from another without any idea of injuring any. There cannot be sin in the act, as the mental sining is absent. Let us remember, therefore, that the origin of sin is in the mind. If you think any act is sinful, you must avoid it. There is no act which merely by its nature is sinful. In the order of society which deprives every body of rights to property, there cannot be theft. In the order of society, where there is no marital relationships, there cannot be adultery. In the order of society where everyone is actuated by high ideals of duty, there cannot be any sin at all. Hence sin is a relative thing merely. There is no sin in the act itself unrelated to an actor. Mankind is not weighed down by anything like a sin in the form of concrete weight dragging him down. The whole pull of man's nature is upwards through the soul. Hence you are committing a sin, when you look upon yourselves as sinful. You have all to look upwards towards the Light and then you cease to think that the angelic spirit of man can ever be committing sins.

Sin is relative to the stage of evolution of the soul. In the stage of materialistic outlook, injury to

others alone amounts to sin. In the stages of higher evolution, the mental act behind actions, constitutes sin. In still higher stages, the omission to do one's duty constitutes sin. A power entrusted to you, and not used, is itself sinful. Wealth, position, and social status all imply duties, failure to do which is sin. In the case of the highly evolved soul—a great Saint—the mere desire to live, again, through the materialistic aspects of life for the pleasures derivable, is sin. So we understand that sin is a term, which has different meanings when related to different people. There is no sin in the absolute sense.

The path of soul-evolution is very broad in the early stages and

narrows towards the goal. A straying from the path is delaying evolution and is therefore a sin. It is sin to stray from the path of righteousness as also to go backwards against the path of evolution. The punishment for sin is delayed evolution and the suffering caused by ignorance and the wallowing in the mire of Maya. To the man who has started on the broad path of counter evolution, the world begins to become a bog of misery dragging him back to the starting point where he will be in the same footing as the animal creation. The long, laborious path of ascending the ladder of evolution has again to be started in the next birth.

THOUGHT GEMS

- I. If self be predominant the man is unsociable.
- II. Whosoever suspects thinks himself suspected.
- III. Who will be friendly to him who hath not good opinion of others?
- IV. A sound mind cannot be without modesty and humility.
- V. None can do so much harm to a man as he doeth to himself.
- VI. It is godlike to take pleasure in the good of others.
- VII. Where there is only a show of religion there is only an imagination of happiness.
- VIII. Where there is most of God there is least of self.
- IX. More perfect less boisterous.
- X. Religion is a good mind and a good life.
- XI. Nothing is more spiritual than that which is moral.
- XII. He that doeth wrong to himself to whom will he do right?
- XIII. Fair construction and courteous behaviour are the greatest charity.
- XIV. A good man's life is a representative of God.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Science and Superstition: By M. N. Roy. Published by Indian Renaissance Association Ltd., Dehradun. Price Re. 1-8-0. Pages 164.

This book is 'a collection of random notes' originating in a jail, and not in a university or research institute. Its professed aim is to help the material progress and spiritual liberation of India. The plan of achieving these two important ends, as outlined here, is neither very original nor unfamiliar. Or, the book may be having no such plan, for it does not give any constructive suggestion. It is assumed that scientific knowledge and modern education are alone sufficient for effecting the 'belated renaissance of India'. The sooner India is cured of her religious mode of thought the happier her people will be; for the ideas of religion are errors born of prejudices rooted in primitive ignorance.

'Men are perverted enough,' it is declared in the book, 'being ashamed of what they are,—animals.' Certainly those who act and think so that they may become more humane if not divine also are perverts on this supposition. Those who are not ashamed of being animals of course are not disturbed by values such as reverence, honesty, chastity, consistency, and similar others which are but 'taboos' for them. The present author is 'a believer in the morality of theft'. The book bristles with several up-to-date suggestions scientifically set down. For instance, chastity and self-control are 'sublimated hypocrisy.' Primarily all love is an 'emotional reflex of the urge of an organism to reproduce itself.' So ultimately we are to trace the scientists' love for research and the author's love of exposing superstitions to the same urge, quite scientifically. As suggested in this scientific document orthodox Hindu wedlock is only the selling of a woman by herself and incest is not so

unnatural as people think. One may naturally expect in such a modern work a scathing criticism of religious theories and experiences. Many of them are trite repetitions of what has appeared before from the pen of the enemies of religion several times. When one of the visitors attributed Sri Ramakrishna's religious ecstasies to obsession, he readily admitted that he was mad for God while others are mad after something else. Swami Vivekananda said: Religion is realization and character is the test of realization. Let us test each one's obsession in the crucible of character.

In the age of aeroplanes and radios and talkies the word science has a magical charm. Under its delusion one is apt to think that the circle of scientific knowledge is closed. But a true scientist never denies flatly what he fails to understand or conceive of; he is never anxious for personal distinction. Idealized experiments on which many of our scientific theories rest can never be actually performed. A physicist knows that the Law of Inertia cannot be derived directly from experiment, but by speculative thinking consistent with observation. The theory of transmigration was postulated to explain certain facts which empirical experience cannot fully explain—even modern ecology cannot shed light over certain mysteries. We may easily ridicule a popular representation of the theory coloured by facile imagination; but the ground of the theory is not shaken by that. Modern psychology is still in its infancy. Speaking of its scientific limitations such an eminent authority as Sir Charles Sherrington pronounced in his Rede Lectures of 1933: 'But strictly we have to regard the relation of mind to brain as still not merely unsolved but still devoid of a basis for its very beginning.' The psychology that has no psyche is only physiology. Psycho-analysis is concerned with religious intuition. But even accepting that the idea of God

is only a projection, that can never prove that God Himself is a projection. That is established on other grounds than psychology i.e., the laws of Nature, etc. It is no fault of the Taj if a savage does not appreciate its beauty. 'Till the heart becomes pure,' said Sri Ramakrishna, 'one cannot even believe in the existence of God.'

The book is written in a vivid informal style, but without the detachment and objective outlook characteristic of a scientific work.

Those who have read the brilliant works of Russell, Dewy, and others meet with much disappointment in this work, both in respect of the matter and manner. The book however has a lesson for those who accept all that is promulgated in the name of religion. Everywhere religion requires cleansing, not by propaganda, but by producing men of sovereign character satisfying the highest ideals of religion. On closing this book the impression is unavoidable that it is a negative work.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, A New Type of Residential College at Belur Math.

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, which has recently been affiliated to the Calcutta University up to the I-A standard, opens on July 4, 1941. It comes into existence as part of a vast scheme of educational experiment. Swami Vivekananda dreamed of an institution where the shortcomings of the present system of education would be removed and the boys would be taught, trained, and disciplined along lines which would make them loyal to the true interests of the nation and prepare them for the battle of life. The Vidyamandira is the humble beginning of this great experiment.

The Vidyamandira, which is a wholly residential college, is located amidst peaceful surroundings on an extensive plot of land lying between the Grand Trunk Road and the monastery at Belur. It is less than four miles from Howrah and is linked with Calcutta by a regular bus service. It has been granted affiliation in English, Bengali, Sanskrit, History, Logic, Mathematics, and Civics up to the I-A standard for the present. It is equipped with an exceptionally brilliant Staff, including some highly qualified monastic

members of the Mission. The College, which is housed in a double-storeyed commodious building, will soon develop into a First Grade Institution.

The Vidyamandira being wholly residential in character, the *alumni* will get, in addition to all the advantages of modern university education, an opportunity to live in close touch with the resident teachers and enjoy the benefits of home life. They will be helped through religious and moral training to acquire a steady character and a healthy outlook on life. Special attention will be paid to their physical well-being as well, and there will be ample provision for outdoor games and indoor exercises under a trained teacher.

The Hostel is a three-storeyed building with the latest sanitary arrangements, electric lights, etc., and has accommodation for about sixty students at present. It will be managed by the monastic members of the Staff. Total charges including board, lodging, and tuition will be Rs. 25.

Admission begins just after the publication of the results of Matriculation Examination. For Prospektus and Admission Forms applications should be made with one anna stamp to the Principal, the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, P.O. Belur Math. Dist. Howrah.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By **Swami Vivekananda**

RELIGION is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or any one else's opinion about religion. The true eternal principles have to help the people. First of all we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realized the eternal truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be followed—Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Sri Rama-krishna and others. Keep aside for the present the Brindavan aspect of Sri Krishna and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring out the *Gita*, with the voice of a lion, and bring into daily use the worship of Shakti—the Divine Mother, the source of all power. We now mostly need the ideal of the hero with the tremendous spirit of *rajas* thrilling through his veins from head to foot—the hero who will dare and die to know the truth, the hero whose armour is renunciation, whose sword is wisdom. We now want the spirit of the brave warrior in the battle field.

Make the character of Mahavira your ideal. At the command of Ramachandra, he crossed the ocean! He had no care for life or death. He was perfect master of the senses and wonderfully sagacious. Build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that ideal all the other ideals will gradually manifest themselves in life. Obedience to the Guru without questioning and strict observance of Brahmacharya —this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so on the other he represents leonine courage, striking the world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama. A supreme indifference to every

thing except the service of Rama. Only the carrying out of Sri Rama's behest is the one vow of his life. Such whole-hearted devotion is wanted.

At the present time, the worship of the divine play of Sri Krishna with the Gopis is not good. Playing on the flute and so on will not regenerate the country. Playing on the *khol* and *kartal* and dancing in the frenzy of the *kirtana* has degenerated the whole people. In trying to imitate the highest *sadhana*, the preliminary qualification for which is absolute purity, they have been swallowed in dire *tamas*. Are not drums made in the country? Are not trumpets and kettle drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of effeminate forms of music, the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. The *damaru* and horn have to be sounded, drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes, and with 'Mahavira, Mahavira' on our lips and shouting 'Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom,' the quarters are to be reverberated. The music which awakens only the softer feelings of man is to be stopped now for some time. The people are to be accustomed to hear the *dhrupad* music.

Through the thunder roll of the dignified Vedic hymns, life is to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived. If you can build your character after such an ideal then a thousand others will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage. Never allow weakness to overtake your mind. Remember Mahavira, remember the Divine mother, and you will see that all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once.

The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourself means love for all, love for animals, love for everything, for you are all one. It is the great faith which will make the world better. The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have, would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive-power has been more potent than another in the lives of great men and women, it is that faith in them-

selves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great they became great.

Infinite strength is religion. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. All sins and all evils can be summed up in that one word, weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil doing. It is weakness that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that makes man injure others. Let them all know what they are, let them repeat day and night what they are. 'Soham!' Let them suck it in with their mother's milk, this idea of strength—I am He! This is to be first heard; and then let them think of it and out of that thought, out of that heart, will proceed works such as the world has never seen.

Tell the truth boldly. All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls. And here is the test of truth—anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually, and spiritually, reject as poison. There is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating. Go back to your Upanishads, the shining, strengthening, the bright, philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be at hand.

Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy; we cannot combine. We speak of many things parrot-like, but never do them. Speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause? Physical weakness. This sort of weak-brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through foot-ball than through the study of the *Gita*. You will understand *Gita* better with biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better, with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourselves as men.

Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. It is the only literature in the world, where you find the word 'Abhiih', 'Fearless', used again and again. In no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or man. And in my mind rises from the past, the vision of the great emperor of the west,

Alexander the Great, and I see as it were in a picture the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our Sannyasins in the forest; the old man he was talking to perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor astonished at his wisdom tempting him with gold and honour, to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold and smiles at his temptations, and refuses. And then the Emperor standing on his authority as Emperor says, 'I will kill you, if you do not come' and the man bursts into a laugh, and says, 'you never told such a falsehood in your life as you tell just now.' Who can kill me? For I am spirit unborn and undecaying. That is strength!

There are thousands to weaken us and of stories we have had enough. Therefore my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength, every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads.

But no scriptures can make us religious. We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of the religion or of God. We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth until we experience it ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that they have no value whatever.

We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. On the other hand, irreligious men have been produced from the most intellectual training. It is one of the evils of western civilization—intellectual education alone without taking care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish. When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. It goes beyond the intellect and reaches what is called inspiration. Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart the Lord speaks. Temples and churches, books or forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual

child strong enough to take the higher steps. Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is being and becoming. It is realization.

The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men of the religious plane. At the same time the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men. Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. Some will even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human mind, called fanaticism. Yet out of this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have risen from time to time potent voices proclaiming peace and harmony.

The time was ripe for one to be born who would see in every sect the same spirit working, the same God; one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the down-trodden, and the same time whose grand, brilliant intellect would harmonize all conflicting sects not only in India but also outside India; and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion, into existence. Such a man was born and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years. I learned from my master the wonderful truth, that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion. Sri Ramakrishna never spoke a harsh word against anyone. So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he belonged to them. He loved every one; to him all religions were true. His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma.

Let our watchword then be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy. Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix. I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see light, which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all these but shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation, going on? It is a marvellous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to all that are to come in the future.

This is a chapter in the book 'Swami Vivekananda, on Education' being the sayings of the Swami collected and arranged by Sri T. S. Avinashilingam, M.L.A. (Central).

FENCE OR AMBULANCE

'T was a dangerous cliff, as they freely confessed,
 Though to walk near its crest was so pleasant;
 But over its terrible edge there had slipped
 A duke and full many a peasant;
 So the people said something would have to be done
 But their prospects did not at all tally.
 Some said, "Put a fence 'round the edge of the cliff,"
 Some, "An ambulance down in the valley."

But the cry for the ambulance carried the day
 For it spread through the neighbouring city;
 A fence may be useful or not, it is true,
 But each heart became brim full of pity
 For those who slipped over the dangerous cliff,
 And dwellers in highway and alley
 Gave pounds or gave pence, not to put up a fence
 But an ambulance in the valley.

" For the cliff is all right if you're careful," they said.
 " And if folks ever slip and are dropping,
 It isn't the slipping that hurts them so much
 As the shock down below when they're stopping;"
 So day after day these mishaps occurred,
 Quick forth would these rescuers sally,
 To pick up the victims that fell off the cliff
 With the ambulance down in the valley.

Then an old sage remarked, " It's a marvel to me
 That people give far more attention
 To repairing results than to stopping the cause,
 When they'd much better aim at prevention.
 Let us stop at its source all this mischief," cried he,
 " Come neighbours and friends, let us rally;
 If the cliff we will fence we might almost dispense
 With the ambulance down in the valley."

" Oh, he's a fanatic," the others rejoined,
 Dispense with the ambulance? Never!
 He'd dispense with all charities, too, if he could,
 No, no! we'll support them forever!
 Aren't we picking up folks just as fast as they fall?
 Shall this man dictate to us? Shall he?
 Why should people of sense stop to put up a fence
 While their ambulance works in the valley?"

But a sensible few, who are practical too,
 Will not bear with such nonsense much longer;
 They believe prevention is better than cure,
 And their party will soon be the stronger.
 Encourage them then with your voice, purse and pen,
 And (while other philanthropists dally)
 They will scorn all pretense and put a stout fence
 On the cliff that hangs over the valley.

Better guide well the young than reclaim them when old,
 For the voice of true wisdom is calling;
 To rescue the fallen is good, but 'tis best
 To prevent other people from falling;
 Better close up the source of temptation and crime
 Than deliver from dungeon and galley;
 Better put a strong fence 'round the top of the cliff,
 Than an ambulance in the valley.

(Anonymous poem quoted in H. E. Walter's work on Genetics)

Every man a little beyond himself is a fool.
 Every dog is a lion at home.
 Experience is the father of wisdom and memory the mother.
 For mad words deaf ears.
 Friendship that flames goes out in a flash.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND PRACTICAL RELIGION¹

By Sister Savitri

It is indeed a source of joy to see that the Blessed Lord's advent and mission did not end with His human life, but are still being fulfilled daily by the untiring efforts of His Children who endeavour to spread His divine message of unity and love, charity and devotion, to the remote villages and cities, far away from His humble birthplace.

Sri Ramakrishna did not come for the sake of a city or a province or even a country. He took birth in the vast nation of Humanity and was not only its patriot but also its worshipper. Humanity was to Him nothing less than the manifold appearance of the Divine Mother or God in human form.

Everyone is thus entitled to lay claim on Him and his treasure of spirituality as one's true heritage. Whether one belongs to the North, the East, the South, or the West; whether a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Mahomedan, or a Christian the lover of God and Humanity will know and worship Sri Ramakrishna as his very own. The sincere follower of His precepts will gladly tread the spiritual path without risking his personal views and religion. Nay, he will rather remodel and enrich them by assimilating them with the highest in other creeds and ethics. For the way taught and lived by Sri Ramakrishna is so simple: 'Be true to yourself. Surrender your cares to the Lord. See God in everything and everything in God.' And Sri Ramakrishna

realized this supreme truth at every moment of His life. It is also possible for us to achieve this end, if we sincerely desire, recognize, and realize the divine presence in all cosmic manifestations.

To the scoffing materialist, religion is but an obsolete word. And it carries an atmosphere of suspicion with regard to the members of one religion towards those of another.

To the conventionally religious their own faith means truthfulness and morality, as far as these can be maintained consistently with their various duties, their pleasures and their idea of the service of God.

In short, religion is seldom allowed to transcend the rigid bounds of virtue and good conduct. Should the secker of God dare to slight the fruits of Heaven and soar to the towering heights of renunciation, he would be considered a deluded lunatic or at best a simpleton who scorns the God-given comforts of life and thus perforce invites misery on his head.

Many a devotee mad with divine love or divine knowledge became thus an object of ridicule to strangers, nay, his own co-religionists. Few can know the nature of that intense yearning that consumes the whole being in the search of God. Fewer still can realize the true value of the priceless jewels bestowed on this sacred land, which has been blessed, time and again, by the birth of such true seekers who not only followed the rules of good conduct as imposed

¹ Extracts from the Presidential address on the occasion of the Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Haripad, May 11, 1941.

by their natural tendencies, but also soon surrendered to their inner and higher promptings, and plunged heedless of consequence into the waters of life that spread in the inmost depths of God-consciousness.

Sri Ramakrishna was more than such a jewel. He was the maker of those seekers, the *Divine Master* who took birth to teach by example the true meaning of religion which is not the perpetuation of rituals, but the assimilation of the highest truths as a proper means to realization.

Religion is but the path. Rituals and forms are necessary only to create a religious tendency in those who need an awakening of the mind through the steadfast influence of pure habits.

Elaborate rituals were quite efficacious in the past. For in those days respect, reverence, charity, and sacrifice were in the very atmosphere and people lived to a good old age. But today, with the general change in living and the rapid passage of life when vice passes for virtue and is extolled, and new and old ideas intermingling with social traditions producing a veritable chaos, the truly religious need not emphasize the perpetuation of forms and rituals, but should dedicate their whole heart and soul to the service of the Ideal.

Of what avail is it to a man to bathe, worship, and consider himself holy by blindly following the injunctions of the *Sastras*, if the mind that is to be purified and made fit to carry him yonder to the Bliss that passeth all understanding is black with evil thoughts?

Where is the leisure in these days for the five hours' worship and the many other daily duties enjoined of

old? The first quarter of a man's life is wasted in childish pranks. Of the remainder, one half is spent in eating and sleeping, and the remaining half alone is available to live and think. How can he get sufficient time to work for his salvation as well as for the service of others?

Let us, therefore, waste no more precious time. Old age comes soon enough and youth will return only in the next birth. Let us be up and doing from this very minute, for it is never too late nor too early to make a start. Make use of 'Tamasic' devotion in the words of Sri Ramakrishna.² It is a short cut in this age of 'Tamasic' means. Demand as of right the attaining of the goal, for it is already yours. All we need is to acquire the zest of such intense faith and discard with one stroke the sheaths of worldliness. Real religion at the present age is remembrance of the Lord in every action and the seeing of God in everything.

Forms and rituals are not necessary when the soul develops true yearning for God. Did Sri Ramakrishna suffer degradation when He gave up the sacred thread? As He himself says, 'It has dropped away of itself like the dried leaf of the palm tree. From a man of true religion and realization, such external

²This is the way in which Sri Ramakrishna used to kindle the flame of faith and initiative in the heart of too morose and languid devotees. He would compare the followers of the 'Tamasic' aspect of devotion with a band of dacoits raiding a house, and ready to defy whatsoever stood on their way. He ascribed to them a wonderful strength of mind and a blazing faith in the Name of the Lord.

marks of distinction fall off by themselves.'

The true test of religion is the state of the mind and the heart and not of the body. 'Keep the knowledge of Advaita in your pocket and act in the world as you think fit,' taught Sri Ramakrishna, thereby describing the religious attitude of life of one who follows the path of knowledge.

The devotional path has to be followed with equal fervour though the Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) of this path need not necessarily throw overboard the scriptures. It was Sri Ramakrishna who revived the true meaning of the scriptures. In His sincere and simple way, He showed the path for the children of today, overladen with poverty, grief and disease. Even though they may often be pressed down by evil tendencies, the weight and power of such can be easily overcome by performing all duties in a selfless spirit of dedication to the Lord. Thus they will gradually begin to regard Him as their nearest and dearest until a true kinship is established with the Hidden Reality within their own selves, leading to the removal of the last veils of ignorance.

Sri Ramakrishna shows that the way to success in each religion is through sincerity and true yearning. These are the gate-openers of the passage of faith and dispassion that leads to the ocean of Light. The greater the yearning the nearer is God and the nearer the God, the less the rituals and formalities with their various and varied appeals. Sri Ramakrishna used to emphasize this point beautifully by this simple simile. 'The stranger can at best enter the outer court-yard or even

the drawing room of the rich land-owner's house, but his child can enter any room and roam about through the house wherever he likes.'

Let the mind constantly dwell on the Lord and visualize the world as the vast mansion of the Beloved. Then the devotee can perform each of his duties as an act of worship.

A religion which is not sincerely taken up to realize the Ideal leads to ruin. The light-hearted devotee will find himself deluded by his own selfish desires and expectations. The insincere yogi will soon fall a victim to troubles and delusions and through lack of courage and faith, will be overcome by the obstacles on the way. It is essential, therefore, to reject any and every selfish motive as the goal or badge of the religious and spiritual life. The renunciation of worldly desires is the first great step to realization. Nay, true selfless devotion by itself leads one smoothly to renounce worldly attachment.

Many and varied are the paths and Sadhanas; but if one is earnest and willing, one realizes that the way is easy and simple. When asked by Uddhava as to which was the best and safest way to realize Him, Sri Krishna, having described the various paths with the injunctions of the Scriptures regarding them, replied:—

जयं हि सर्वकल्पानां सद्वीचीनो मतो मम ।

मद्भावः सर्वमृतेषु मनोवाक्यायवृत्तिमिः ॥

'To look upon all beings as myself in thought, word, and deed is the best of all methods according to me.'

This holds good in all circumstances and at all times. Which path is greater than the one that fulfills itself at each breath and in every moment of our life? To be conscious

of the Divine Presence in all beings and to serve them all in thought, word, and deed is, in these days of stress and strain, the highest worship.

Let all doubts vanish, for the Lord resides in our very self. Often we behave like the person who worried himself in the search of his spectacles while he was wearing them all the time. Similarly, we attribute to God a nature unknown to and separate from us and then fret about unconscious of the fact that our very selves are but parts and partake of that Divine nature.

Religion is for the young of heart and the daring in mind. True religion must be followed with the enthusiasm of a warrior and the humility and simplicity of a child. Faith is the weapon of the warrior and surrender the shield of the child. Both have tremendous perseverance.

If a man is true to himself he will hold on steadfastly to the Ideal and fearlessly wade through life, across the heaving ocean of joys and sorrows to the blessed shores of the Infinite.

Let us live religion by serving the living God, the In-dweller of all creatures. If we succeed in this constant worship we shall not only attain the goal of religion but shall become the very embodiment of religion. The shining example of Sri Ramakrishna alone should inspire and encourage every earnest lover of God to follow in His footsteps. For there was not a single moment in His life when He lost sight of the Ideal. His speech, action, nay His very breath, ever arose consciously from the depths of His inner self as a constant token of dedication and love to the Infinite One.

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE

By M. D. Mamgain, M.A.

THE recognition of the moral law is strictly in harmony with the teachings of modern psychology on the central place of purpose or ideal in human life. The idea that the world is arranged to serve man's purpose has fallen into discredit, and the idea that he is in essence the arranger of his own world—has purpose in and for himself—has gained ground everywhere. Man differs from all lower kinds of life in that he is conscious of his ideals. Ideals exist not only in him but for him. The animals, said Kant, are guided by law, man by the idea of law; and this is true also of the ideal which is under the idea of law. The hedonist

view that man is the most cunning of animals and that the ends are given to him in his instincts and passions is only half truth. What they forget is that man's rationality does not stop with fuller control of means to satisfy appetites and passions, but it enables him to break away from this lower circle altogether, and set before himself ends involving the subordination of lower appetites.

This new circle of motives differs from bodily appetite in that they are objects which we may always be attaining, but which are never completely attained. They are ideal rather than definitely realisable things or conditions. While the satisfaction

of a bodily desire leads nowhere beyond itself, the attainment of these self-constituted objects as a rule opens up a new scope for achievement. In being rational they are "progressive" and they involve the control and subordination of simpler desires, and hence the organization of life on a new basis.

How is this possible? Remote as is the rational life, how, we may ask, does it succeed in establishing itself? How is the control of 'reason' rendered possible? The answer is again found in psychology in the formation of sentiments or secondary springs of action. Partly by memory of individual experience, partly by force of example, partly by the support given to them by public opinion, partly by the constancy with which, more or less unconsciously, they occupy our thoughts, those ideals or objects take root in affections, and as they root themselves, they come to exhibit an active hostility to all that is opposed to them, an active affinity to all that favours them. The pressure to which our instincts and passions are subjected by our 'ideals' does not involve their suppression, but the direction of them into channels in which they will be an assistance instead of an obstruction. Wherever we have such centres of practical 'ideals' we have the condition of such organizing pressure, with an accompanying feeling of obligation on the effective operation of which depends all that we mean by purposefulness, constancy, loyalty in human life.

The ideal thus is ultimately to be found in the conception of end. The end is an 'ideal' form of life. All consciously conceived ends may be

described as the realization of self in one form or the other, the highest good being that of the self conceived as a whole. The ideal cannot consist in a mere state of feelings resulting from the satisfaction of the qualitatively identical desires, nor yet in complete determination of reason apart from all desires, but in the subordination of the part of our nature and the activities to which they prompt, to the law of the self as a whole, which includes both reason and desire. The self thus defined is not an isolated atom, but is only comprehensible as a member of a society, whose moral judgments reflect a moral order already established in its environment. T. H. Green describes the end as 'the harmonious development of all the potentialities of human nature'. But the prejudice against the self as essentially social is inveterate. The error consists in the restrictedness of the idea of the self which belies at once its own capacities of reaction and the claim which society has upon them. Then, is the ideal which is the source of progress primarily one of a better form of social life or a higher type of personal character? Different answers will probably be given in case of different individuals. Where sympathy and imagination are active, the inner call tends at once to be translated into terms of higher forms of social well-being. On the other hand, where sympathy and imagination are sluggish, but the will strong and the purpose earnest, the call may come rather in the form of a demand for greater purity of motive and more consistent character. Each of these forms has its strength and its weakness. The strength of the former is the enthusiasm that goes with it.

The danger is that the cultivation of qualities of character on which all social well-being depends should be neglected for the sake of 'quick return' in the shape of increase of general happiness. The strength of the latter is the will bent on being itself that which, in so far as the general well-being is the end, it must wish all other wills to be. The corresponding danger is that the essentially social character of all forms of goodness should drop out of sight, that 'scrupulousness should become scruples, and that wholeness should be sacrificed to an artificial holiness'. The two attitudes, however, can never be entirely separate.

Leaving these psychological and social problems apart, if we study it from the metaphysical aspect we find that the world of knowledge is not so much a revelation of an external universe as a revelation of our own nature as a sentient being. Mind is an active principle of interpretation to which the world comes as a system of signs like the signals received by a clerk in a telegraphic depot, rather than as reflection in the mirror. The standard of interpretation is furnished by itself. The fundamental principle it brings with it to the interpretation of the signs supplied from without is that they should form an intelligible unity or whole. Progress in knowledge has to be looked at just as much in the light of a progressive revelation to the self of its own nature as in that of an unfolding of an external world to an observing subject. Therefore progress comes from within. New objects, events, and occasions are not the causes, or primary sources, of intellectual development. Thus the objective world

of human relations is to conscience what the external world experience is to consciousness. As the principle of interpretation in the former case is the ideal which the conscious self cherishes of a systematically related world of experience, representing its own complete realization as a being capable of knowledge, so the principle which conscience brings to the interpretation of moral facts is the ideal of a system of moral relations representing realization of the self. As progress in knowledge does not come from without but is the result of the inner demand of the self for a more and more perfect embodiment of its ideal of unified knowledge, so progress in 'ideals' of life has its spring, not in mere adjustment of the self to changing circumstances but in the interpreting, constructive power of conscience finding in new circumstances the occasion for further realization of its ideals of rationalized and unified conduct.

So far as there is consciousness at all, so far as we can say that we are dealing with progress of human beings and not simply with machines, there is involved not a mere instinctive response to altered circumstances or adaptation to new environments but an interpretation of the circumstances as an occasion to realize an end which belongs to man as a man. Whether this end is conceived in terms of internal worth or of social good it does not matter. Reformers and martyrs were the interpreters and administrators of a better human nature. In demanding the reforms of institutions as they are, the reformer is only demanding room for a fuller expression of the ideal which they represent, and apart from which they are meaningless. The

true reformer thus feels himself the representative of the larger rendering of human nature for which many who have gone before have stood. Their ideal is his ideal. His deepest interest is to realize it. No minor interest has in comparison any hold

upon him. Fortune, wealth, companions, life itself are of value to him only in so far as they aid him in working for it. To him the most vital of all truths is that:

'He that loveth his life shall lose it,
He that hateth it shall keep it.'

BHAGAVADGITA

P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A.

I

THE *Bhagavadgita* is the most popular Hindu scripture. Its importance is second to none in respect of Hindu Philosophical doctrines. It is one of the triple texts (*prasthanatrayi*) of Vedanta. Sankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva have commented on it. Each have striven hard to prove that the doctrines of their respective schools are enshrined in the text of the *Gita*. Modern politicians hold that the *Gita* is the book on Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi, the saint-politician of our land, has regarded the *Gita* as the universal mother. He believes that the *Gita*, within the compass of its seven-hundred verses, gives us the quintessence of all the *Sastras* and the *Upanishads*. He wrote: 'I lost my mother who gave me birth long ago, but this eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side, ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I seek refuge in her bosom.' He concludes his estimate as follows: 'I can declare that the *Gita* is ever presenting me with fresh lessons; and if somebody tells me that it is my delusion, my reply to him would be that I should hug this delusion as

my richest treasure. The *Gita* inculcates in us the duty of perseverance in the face of seeming failure. It teaches us that we have a right to action only, but not the fruits thereof, and that success and failure are one and the same thing at bottom. It calls upon us to dedicate ourselves, body, mind, and soul, to duty, and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of chance desires and undisciplined impulses.'

Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak points out in his *Gitarahasya* 'that in the literature of the whole world there is no book like the *Gita*. It is the most luminous and priceless gem. It gives peace to afflicted souls; it makes us masters of spiritual wisdom.' William Von Humboldt said that the *Gita* is 'the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song, existing in any known tongue.' Many others also have praised the *Gita* in glowing terms.

There must be something in the *Gita* which time cannot destroy. Its universal appeal has to be accounted for by the fundamental fact that it is a book of religion, a theistic scripture. The *Gita* posits the existence of an all-loving omnipotent God Who is moved by the distress

of men and their ignorance. So it may rightly be called a layman's scripture. It does not insist on a discipline which only a few can practise. The demands of the *Gita* view of life is within the capacity of all.

Its popularity is due to two factors: *the formal as well as the material excellences*.¹ It is a chapter from the 'Bhishmaparvan' of the *Mahabharata*. The style of the poem is charming and flowing. The dialogue form gives the whole poem a dramatic setting and the two fascinating figures add to the beauty of the poem. The worth of the poem is due to its utterance by Lord Krishna who is an Avatar of Vishnu.

Besides these formal excellences, the message of the *Gita* has a universal appeal, because it breathes the air of *toleration*. The toleration of the *Gita* is not born of easy indulgence in error or indifference to the issues involved. It is not the intellectual's love of moderation, nor the high-brow's dislike of dogma. 'It is not the politician's love of compromise, being all things to all men; nor is it a simple and negative freedom from antipathies. It is an understanding insight, full trust in the basic Reality.' It believes in the democratic principle that men grow differently and reach their best differently. It insists on toleration. It is not dogmatic. It does not admit the feeling that 'one man's God is another man's devil'. It believes in the doctrine of *adhikara* i.e., eligibility. Each has his own law of development; there is no use in forcing one to a preconceived pattern. There is such a thing as the law of spiritual

progression, and we should not hasten the pace of spiritual development of anyone nor cut it to shape, or beat it into a pattern. Such a process is against the law of human beings. This fact has been amply illustrated in the *Gita* doctrine of *svadharma*. Lord Krishna says, 'Whoever with true devotion worships any deity, in him I deepen that devotion; and through it he fulfils his desire (II: 23).' Krishna asks the man of learning not to go and disturb the faith of one whose spiritual development is on a lower plane. Thus the appeal of the *Gita* is not without its message to any in whatever walk of life he may be.

Secondly the *Gita* stresses eminently on life more than on doctrines. Religion, according to the author of the *Gita*, is ethics lived. It is more a way of life than a view. 'Religion is behaviour and not mere belief.' The *Gita* is very helpful this way. It helps us to face the concrete problems of life and instructs us the manner in which we should do it. It asks us to work with the material available here and now. The kingdom of heaven is to be built here and now. The *Gita* is a guide to the art of living. It furnishes us with standards to judge our actions in life. It is concrete in its suggestions in respect of practical life. The metaphysics of the *Gita* does not discuss the recondite and subtle detail like the Upanishads and the *Vedanta-sutras*. It broadly lays down certain general principles which are said to be extracted from the Upanishads and settled upon by the *Vedanta-sutras*. A familiar verse compares the *Gita* to the nectar-like milk. All the Upanishads are compared to cows, and Krishna to the milkman. Arjuna

¹ Cf. *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* by Prof. Hiriyanna, Pp. 117 to 119.

is compared to a calf drinking the milk, *Gita*. Further the colophon of every chapter of the *Gita* concludes 'Bhagavad gitasu upanishadsu.'

Though the *Gita* lays great stress on ethical life the fact cannot be overlooked that it is pre-eminently a book of religion. It is not a *dharma-sastra* but a *yoga-sastra*. Service of Humanity can never by itself take the place of God. The good life is not final. It is only a stepping-stone to godly life. Religious experience, i.e., fellowship with God, is the vision and aim of the *Gita*. It is not a mere humanitarian gospel advocating kindness to men and duty to society. Duty to society is no doubt enjoined on the individual; but in serving society the individual is indirectly serving God. God is the centre of life. All activities must be harnessed to that centre. *Iswarapriti* is the final purpose of all action. The detachment which the *Gita* teaches is not the doctrine of the stoics, asking us to be fortified against allurements or distress. It is detachment to the things of the world and an attachment to God. The teacher of the *Gita* is a *yogesvara* and the ideal is a *yogin* and the method of attaining it is *yoga*. It is above all a religious scripture urging men to have faith in God and do their duty according to His behests. The entire *Gita* is treated by Mahatma Gandhi as an allegory and not as an argument urging Arjuna to violence. Sir S. Radhakrishnan points out that 'as the dialogue proceeds the dramatic element disappears. The echoes of the battle-field die away and we have only an interview between God and man. The chariot of war becomes the lonely cell of meditation, and a corner of the battle-field where the

voices of the world are stilled a fit place for thoughts on the supreme.'

II

The *Gita* opens with a scene on the battle-field. Arjuna desires to have a view of all his opponents and so requests the divine charioteer to station his chariot in between the two contending armies. He was struck dumb by the ghastliness of the task before him. His limbs gave way, his mouth parched, and his body trembled. His bow slipped from his hand, and he experienced adverse omens. He resolved that he would not fight, and in support of his resolve he trotted out a few arguments common to pacifists.

His prime objection to fight was that it involved the killing of his own kinsmen, teachers, and men whom he loved most. Killing by itself is sin, and it is certainly greater sin if the victims were teachers and kinsmen. Arjuna emphatically states that he does not desire victory and the subsequent kingdom at the cost of the lives of his cousins. Like a 'Satyagrahi' he states that it is better for him to be killed in war, unarmed and unresisting, than to kill his own kith and kin. Further, Arjuna pleads that the chances of victory are too great and are not helpful in determining him to action.

As against all his words Lord Krishna points out that the arguments of Arjuna are only apparently ethical. A deep metaphysical examination as the one that the *Gita* undertakes dissolves all the doubts of Arjuna. The doubts of Arjuna are due to his uncritical acceptance of the things of the world. Krishna argues that Arjuna's grief does not hold water at all. If Arjuna laments over the loss of his kinsmen, it is wrong to do so.

The Soul does not die. Death is only for the body. Souls have neither birth nor death. They exist for all times. They are eternal. It is the body that perishes and not the Soul. 'Weapons cannot cleave the Soul, fire does not burn It, water does not make It wet, wind doeth not dry It.' Hence on the ground of the indestructibility of the Soul, Krishna points out that Arjuna's grief is meaningless. As for the destruction of the body it is its law. Being a composition of elements, it is bound to decay. It is just like an instrument which goes out of order, after a specific period of time. Change of bodies are no better than change of clothes. So on that count Arjuna need not grieve.

Arjuna is exhorted to fight the battle and not shirk his responsibilities. In waging the war Arjuna is only discharging the duties pertaining to his order. If in the discharge of one's *svadharma*, sin accrues (as in the case of Arjuna), it does not bind or taint the soul of the doer with demerit (*papa*). It is not mere action that is the object of moral judgment; but it is the motive that determines the moral worth of an action. Arjuna is further told that the non-discharge of his duties would entail demerit as well as bad name. People would question even the military valour of Arjuna.

Arjuna is exhorted to discharge his duty, however unpleasant, on the ground that salvation for an individual consists in treading the path of *svadharma*. The philosophy of activism that the *Gita* preaches is not the mechanical performance of any act. The *Gita* says, 'What is work and what is no work?—even the wise are perplexed here.' It is

the insistence of the performances of one's own duties prescribed by his station (in Prof. Bradley's phrase, 'My station, my duty') that is the fundamental message of the *Gita*.

III

In the history of Hindu thought two paths to perfection are laid out, they are respectively called the *nivritti marga* and the *pravritti marga*. These two are not discontinuous, but one leads on to the other. Sankara explains the emphasis of the *Gita* on Karma in the light of Arjuna's eligibility for it. Arjuna needs the cleansing of the mind. He is an unenlightened soul and as such he is only fit for Karmayoga. Whenever the *Gita* speaks of Karmayoga in extravagant terms it has to be understood in terms of the response to Arjuna's needs. It is in this light that all the verses in the *Gita* that speak high of karma are interpreted by Sankara. He makes the path of works subservient to the path of renunciation.

With acute insight and massive erudition, and rare persuasive skill B. G. Tilak in his *Gitarahasya* makes out a brilliant case for the philosophy of action. Taking the texts by and large, one gets the impression that the *Gita* insists on the performance of action with a devout frame of mind.

Karmayoga of the *Gita* insists on the discharge of the social obligations arising out of the station one occupies in life. We have to recognize a charter of duties before we claim our bill of rights. The *Gita* insists on the performance of duties at all costs, and never countenances their dereliction. The *Gita* says, 'No man can ever be free from a life of action by

merely avoiding active work; and no man can ever reach perfection through mere renunciation. For no man can sit still even for a moment, but does some work. Every one is driven to act in spite of himself, by the impulses of nature.' (III: 4 & 5). 'It is indeed impossible for any embodied being to abstain from work absolutely (XVIII: 11). Then after making out a case for the impossibility of inaction the *Gita* describes the mental frame with which we have to act. We are asked to act with a frame of mind that has no utilitarian motive. We are exhorted to renounce the fruit of activity together with the sense of agency. Act with no sense of agency or attachments to the fruit of action. It is not action that is binding us, but the sense of attachment to the fruits of the action and the sense of egoity. Everyone of our activities must be construed as an offering at the feet of God. The Karmayoga of the *Gita* discovers the golden mean between the two ideals of work and renunciation of work, preserving the excellences of both. While it does not abandon activity, it preserves the spirit of renunciation. 'Work alone art thou entitled to, and not to its fruit. So never work for fruit nor yet desist from work.' (II: 47). 'Know that what they call renunciation is the same as Yoga; O Arjuna, one who has not renounced his desires can even become a Yогin' (VI: 2). The Karmayoga of the *Gita* does include the element of renunciation, but not of the duties that ought to be done. 'The abandonment of it through ignorance is declared to be of the nature of dullness' (XVIII: 7). 'Works of sacrifice, gifts, and penance should

not be given up, but should be performed. For sacrifice, gifts, and penance purify the mind; that these are works that should be done is my decided and final view,' (XVIII: 5 & 6) says Krishna. 'But he who gives up the fruit of work, is regarded as one who has renounced.' The renunciation of the fruits of the action and not action as such is the pith of the *Gita* teaching. Such action is tantamount to inaction. Hence the paradoxical verse in the *Gita*, 'He who sees no work in work, and work in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a Yогin, he has accomplished all his work' (IV: 18).

Terms like Yajna (sacrifice) Karma (action) Jnana (knowledge) and Sannyasa (renunciation) are interpreted afresh in the *Gita*. Yajna in the *Gita* does not mean animal sacrifice, or the sacrifice of material objects, but all activities prompted by a spirit of sacrifice. Karma does not mean mere mechanical action done for the achievement of some objects here or hereafter, but action performed without the desire of the fruit. The Jnana of the *Gita* is not merely intellectually mediated knowledge that does not result in spiritual realization, but the immediate knowledge of God. The Sannyasa of the *Gita* is the giving up of the desire for the fruits and the sense of egoity in respect of any action performed. It is *phala-sannyasa* and not *karma-sannyasa*.

IV

The Lord of the *Gita* is fundamentally a Supreme Person, a Purushottama. He is the abode of infinite number of auspicious attributes. His law is the law of love. He holds none high or low among His devotees.

Every action of the spiritual aspirant must be motivated to secure the pleasure of the Lord. The Lord says: 'Fly unto me for shelter'. In another place He says: 'Fix thy mind on me, be devoted to me, prostrate thyself before me.'

The author of the *Gita* has no patience with men who merely believe in a world that is governed by action and reaction. He denounces the men who profess that 'this world is all that we see, and all that is'. The talk of impenitent rationalists is characterized as *puspitam vacham* (men who reel out florid texts). These fools declare (in the words of the Lord) 'there is nothing else but this; the world is false and is without a moral basis and without a God; what is there that does not spring from mutual union? Lust is the cause of all. Holding such views, these souls commit cruel deeds, come forth as enemies for the destruction of the world. They give themselves up to insatiable desires; full of hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, they hold false views through delusion and act with impure resolves.'

Further the author of the *Gita* is against the literalists and the materialists. The indiscriminate life of self-indulgence sanctioned by the Hedonist has been severely criticized. The *Gita* stands for a careful cultivation of tastes. 'No God must be cheated and none over-paid.' It stands for the training of instincts, and not their thwarting. A harmonious integration of all the impulses is the call of the scripture and not

development of this or that aspect of life to the detriment of others.

The *Gita* idea of Dharma is not one of mere moral altruism. It rejects the mere efficient performance of rituals quite as much as it rejects a vague and undisciplined allegiance to God, as both are inadequate in themselves. It bridges the gulf between ritualism and Humanitarianism. The *Gita* lays equal stress on faith and good works. Faith without active moral life is as vacuous and inadequate as a lofty moral idealism without faith in God. Faith in God should be the informing principle of all moral activity. The *Gita* is not therefore a mere compendium of ethical precepts, but primarily a religious scripture the central emphasis of which is on a loving Father of mankind who is the goal of human aspiration. The morality of the *Gita* is ultimately and intimately rooted in spirituality.

The moral teaching of the *Gita* is not a static compound of prescriptions ready made for defined eventualities. It is a dynamic and a living call to every man to live always in the fear of the Lord and to order his life in accordance with the teaching of the Lord concerning his duty to himself and his duty to society. It is rigid neither in regard to time nor in regard to circumstances. The kingdom of Heaven is not conceived by the *Gita* as a realm of pure mystical experience, unconnected with concrete human relationships. It is not an unearthly conceptional realm but a just and a happy social order.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE ATMAN

By Swami Abhedananda

AFTER patient research and continuous struggle to know the ultimate Truth, the great monistic sages realized that the ego, or the individual soul, is nothing but a changeful receptacle of a still subtler substance, which is unchangeable and eternal. They called it the Atman in Sanskrit. There is no word in the English language which conveys the meaning of this 'Atman'. It is much finer than ego or the living soul of the individual. Atman is the unconditioned reality in man; and the living soul or the individual ego is the subtle covering of the Atman, like the globe that covers the light of a lamp. That Atman, is not a part of the universal ego, but it is one with the unconditioned Reality of the universe, which is called in Sanskrit Brahman, or the All-pervading Spirit, or the Absolute. Sometimes it is called Paramatman, which was translated by Ralph Waldo Emerson as Over-Soul. It is finer than the Cosmic Ego or God. It is sexless, neither masculine nor feminine. It is sometimes translated by the Oriental scholars as the Self. But Self is a confusing word. Some people mistake it for the Anglo-Saxon self, which acts and progresses and which is another name for the ego.

According to the non-dualistic conception of the true nature of man, the Atman or the Self, or the spiritual essence of man, is the same as the Brahman, the spiritual or divine essence of the universe. The relation of the true nature of man to God is no longer like that of a creature to the Creator, nor like that of a son to his father, nor like that of a part to the whole, but it is absolute oneness on the highest spiritual plane. The Atman, or the divine nature of man, is the same as the absolute divinity of the Cosmos. On that highest spiritual plane there is no distinction, no idea of separation, no idea of creation. All ideas of separateness, all differentiations of phenomenal names and forms, merge into the absolute ocean of reality which is unchangeable, eternal and one. The essence of the Creator is infinite, and it interpenetrates the phenomenal forms as the external space pervades every particle of atmos of the phenomenal world. Phenomena are like the waves in the ocean of Infinite Reality. Individual souls are like so many bubbles in that ocean of Absolute Existence. As a bubble rises on the surface of the ocean, takes a form, lives there, comes near other bubbles, lives in a group for some time, moves in the company of others, changes its size,

perhaps, and goes down again; so the individual soul rises in various forms, passes through the different stages of evolution, and lives there for ever and ever, sometimes as manifested and at other times as unmanifested. The light of intelligence in the soul or ego is due to the reflection of the Atman or Divine Spirit on the mirror of the heart of the ego or soul. Therefore the soul is called the image or reflection of the Atman or Divine Spirit.

This idea is beautifully expressed in one of the Upanishads: 'In the cave of our heart have entered the two—the Atman or the Divine Spirit, and the individual ego or soul. Dwelling on the highest summit, or the ether of the heart, the one witnesses the other, while the soul reaps the rewards of its own works. The wise men and sages describe the one as the light, and the other as the reflection, image or shadow.' (*Kathopanishad*, III: 1.) You will notice here what a deep meaning lies at the back of the expression: 'Man is the image of God.' The ancient Vedic sages used the same expression in a sense which many of the best philosophers of the Western world have failed to grasp or comprehend. Thus the most ancient Monistic sages explained the highest relation of the individual soul to Atman or Divine Spirit, by calling it the reflection or image of the Self-effulgent Light of God. But as a reflection cannot exist independent of the light whose reflection it is, so the soul of man cannot exist independent of Atman. Therefore the true nature of the soul is Atman, the divine and real spirit which cannot be divided into parts, and is One Absolute Source of existence, intelligence, and bliss.

Starting from the gross form of body, when a real and earnest seeker after Truth marches onward toward the Absolute, he passes through all the intermediate stages until he reaches that state of divine communion where he realizes the oneness of the Atman with Brahman. Then he declares, I am Brahman, I am He, I am in the sun, in the moon, in stars; I am one with the All-pervading Reality.

He has but sorry food that lives upon the faults of others.

He is a good orator who convinces himself.

He lives the longest that is awake the most hours.

He that goes softly goes safely.

He that has the worst cause makes the most noise.

He that takes no care of himself must not expect it from others.

He who finds faults means to buy.

THE TANTRAS

By Swami Prabhavananda

THE term 'tantra' literally means 'that which saves (*tra*) by that which spreads (*tan*).'¹ The Tantras, then, are the scriptures by means of which knowledge is spread in order to save humanity from ignorance. They are also known as Agamas or revelations in conformity with the revelations of the Vedas. Their authorship is unknown. According to tradition the Tantras were declared by Shiva to his divine consort Shakti (the Divine Mother), and through her the knowledge spread. Their date is uncertain; but they are not modern as many would think. This type of scriptures is known to Buddhism, and an important phase of Buddhism that developed in Tibet is Tantric.

The Tantras in India are divided into three main groups, according as the Deity chosen for worship is Vishnu, Shiva, or Sakti. Thus there are Vaishnava Agamas or Pancharatra, the Shaiva Agamas, and the Shakta Agamas. The Shakta group is the most prolific, so much so, that the word Tantra has come to mean, generally though mistakenly, only the Shakta Agamas. It is to these that we shall give our attention.¹

¹ Of all Indian Scriptures, the Tantras are most often misunderstood by Western scholars, and even native scholars are not altogether free from error. But I must declare in this connection that in recent years one Western student of Eastern philosophy, Sir John Woodroffe, an Englishman and one time Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, has through a lifetime devoted to the study of Tantric literature, done yeoman's service in the

From the nature of the contents the Tantras may be broadly divided into three parts: Sadhana, which includes spiritual practices and disciplines and ritualistic forms of worship; Siddhi, or attainments from such practices; and philosophy. Let us first examine the last of these.

THE PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Tantras is based on the Upanishads. It is non-dualistic and upholds the identity of the individual soul with Shiva-Shakti or, in the language of the Upanishads and of Sankara, Brahman or the Universal Self. Sankara explains the creative power of the universe as Maya, the universe possessing in itself no absolute reality, whereas the Tantras explain this creative power as Shakti or the Divine Mother and the universe as Her play when She has become the universe of mind and matter. Here in their interpretation of reality the Tantras have

cause of a proper understanding of these difficult scriptures, both through translations of original manuscripts and through correct interpretations of their spirit. 'Tantra Shastra (scriptures)', he says, '.... (is) generally spoken of as a jumble of "black magic", and "Erotic mysticism", cemented together by a ritual which is "meaningless mummary". A large number of persons who talk in this strain have never had a Tantra in their hands, and such Orientalists as have read some portions of these scriptures have not generally understood them. Otherwise they would not have found them to be so "meaningless". They may be bad, or they may be good, but they have a meaning. Men are not such fools as to believe in what is meaningless.'

some resemblance to the philosophy of Ramanuja, who regarded the universe as a mode of Brahman, the universe of mind and matter being the body of God. But it should be noted that the Tantras stress the fact that Reality is both Impersonal and Personal.

Shakti or Divine Mother is not distinct from Shiva or Brahman, the Absolute of the Upanishads, but is the *Power of the Absolute*. In the transcendental aspect of life, which is static, where there is but one impartite absolute existence, the truth is known as Shiva or the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss; but in the active, immanent aspect, it is Shakti, the Power—the Divine Mother. Sri Ramakrishna was wont to say that just as fire and its burning power are inseparable, so inseparable are Brahman and Shakti. And Shakti or Divine Mother—the Personal Aspect of the Absolute, the Isvara of the Vedantins and the God of the Christians—becomes the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. From Her the universe has emanated, in Her the universe lives, and unto Herself She at last withdraws the universe.

'It is the desire for the life of form,' writes Sir John Woodroffe in explaining the philosophy of the Tantras, 'which produces the universe'. This desire exists in the collective Vasana (thirst or desire), held like all else in inchoate state in the Mother-Power, which passing from its own Svarupa (formless state) gives effect to them. Upon the expiration of the vast length of time which constitutes a day of Brahma, the whole universe is withdrawn into the great Causal Womb (Yoni) which produced it. The limited selves are

withdrawn into it, and again, when the creative throes are felt, are put forth from it, each appearing in that form and state which its previous Karma had made for it. Those who do good Karma, but with desire and self-regard (Sakama), go, on death, to Heaven and reap their reward in good future birth on earth—for Heaven is also a transitory state. The bad are punished by evil births on earth and suffering in the Hells which are also transitory. Those, however, who have rid themselves of all self-regarding desire and work selflessly (Nishkama Karma), realize the Brahman nature which is Sachchidananda. Such are liberated; that is, never appear again in the world of form, which is the world of suffering, and enter into the infinite ocean of Bliss Itself. This is Moksha or Mukti or liberation. As it is freedom from the universe of form, it can only be attained through detachment from the world and desirelessness. For those who desire the world of form cannot be freed of it. Life, therefore, is a field in which man, who has gradually ascended through lower forms of mineral, vegetable and animal life, is given the opportunity of heaven—life and liberation. The universe has a moral purpose, namely, the affording to all existence of a field wherein it may reap the fruits of its actions. The forms of life are therefore the stairs (Sopana) on which man mounts to the state of infinite, eternal, and formless Bliss. This, then, is the origin and the end of man. He has made for himself his own past and present condition and will make his future one. His essential nature is free. If wise, he adopts the means (Sadhana) which leads to lasting happiness, for

that of the world is not to be had by all, and even when attained is perishable and mixed with suffering.' (*Shakti and Shakta* by Sir John Woodroffe, p. 10-11.)

This quotation adequately summarizes not merely the attitude of the Tantras but of the whole body of the Hindu scriptures towards the origin and the end of man.

SADHANA AND SIDDHI

The Tantras are primarily and fundamentally practical scriptures. The word Sadhana means a striving or discipline for the attainment of a certain prescribed goal. And that goal or Siddhi (attainment) as it may be guessed, is Moksha or liberation from the bondage of ignorance and the chain of recurring birth and death through knowledge of the true Self as it is gained in uniting oneself with Shiva or Brahman. This attainment of knowledge must be direct and immediate, but this can only be won by constant exertion; that is, by the practice of Sadhana. According to both the Tantras and the whole body of Hindu scriptures, infinite knowledge, power, and bliss are latent in every man. The object of Sadhana is just to unfold this knowledge and power and to discover the mine of bliss within.

The authority of these scriptures therefore does not depend on mere belief in them as revelations, but on the fact that their truths can be revealed in one's own soul. That is to say, the test of their validity is primarily a positive one. They claim, moreover, that the spiritual practices they inculcate will bring the desired results to all who follow them. In short, they insist that one

must experiment to experience the truth of God.

These Sadhanas or spiritual disciplines, however, should be undertaken only under the guidance of a Guru or spiritual teacher. All Hindu schools of thought in fact maintain that submission to the direction of a competent teacher is essential if one is to get the knowledge of God; for religion is a practical science to which neither books nor scriptures can be a complete guide. So there must be developed an association with one who is competent and holy, who has demonstrated the truths of religion in his own life, and who can initiate the disciple into the path of spiritual unfoldment. The Tantras define two kinds of such initiation or Diksha: (1) Sambhavi or Shakti and (2) Mantri. Sambhavi or Shakti occurs when the disciple attains supreme knowledge; at that state of maturity Divine vision is immediately revealed by the touch of the guru. Though to us this act may seem fantastic, we see it substantiated in the lives of Krishna, Christ, and Ramakrishna. Christ said, 'Be thou whole (perfect)', and the disciple immediately attained perfection; Krishna gave divine sight to Arjuna, who at once had the vision and the realization of God; and within living memory Ramakrishna could just by a touch give illumination to his disciples.

But this form of initiation is possible only to such supreme teachers as Christ, Krishna, and Ramakrishna. Lesser teachers must have recourse to the other form of initiation, namely, Mantridiksha. In this case the guru initiates the disciple by giving him a Mantra, or

sacred word or formula. In the Tantras the philosophy involved in the Mantras are given in detail, the underlying principle being that words and thoughts are inseparable, and that a complete transformation may be effected in the character of the individual by his repeating and meditating upon a thought with the help of a specific word. The root of initiation, declare these scriptures, is the Mantra; Mantra is the body of God and God is the root of Siddhi or attainment of knowledge and perfection.

Men vary in capacity, temperament, and levels of growth in the intellectual, moral and spiritual spheres. Accordingly, the Tantras classify humanity into three general categories: Divya, or divine; Veera, or heroic; and Pashu, or animal. Those in the plane of Pashu, in whom animal passions are predominant, must avoid all objects of temptation and regularly observe the ritualistic forms of worship and meditation. The Veeras, in whom there is a greater attraction for spiritual than for material things, may abide in the midst of the objects of temptation, while they learn to maintain their equanimity and self-control by devoting their thoughts more and more to God. And they are known as Divya, who have become established in self-control, whose minds are absorbed in the thought of God, and in whom is to be found an expression of all divine qualities, such as love, kindness, and truthfulness—like the emanation of fragrance from a flower.

Four forms of worship and meditation are prescribed in the Tantras. The highest is Brahma-sadbhava, or

meditating on the truth of identity between the inner self of man and Brahman as He exists in all and all exist in Him. The second is constant meditation on the chosen ideal of God within one's own heart. The third is Japa or repetition of the Mantra (the word corresponding to the chosen ideal of God) and prayer. And the last is external worship in an image or a symbol.

Those who are advanced enough to meditate on the truth of the identity of the inner self with God do not need the help of external symbols or rituals; but for others symbols and rituals are always very helpful and in most cases they are essential. In the words of Sir John Woodroffe:

'Brahmanism thus sagely resolves the Western dispute as to the necessity or advisability of ritual. It affirms it for those who have not attained the end of all ritual. It lessens and refines ritual as spiritual progress is made upwards, it dispenses with it altogether when there is no longer need for it. But until a man is a real "knower" some Sadhana is necessary if he would become one. What may be suitable for the unlettered peasant may not be so for those more intellectually and spiritually advanced. It is however a fine general principle of Tantric worship that capacity, and not social distinction such as caste, determines competency for any particular worship.' (*Shakti and Shakta*, p. 275.)

The Tantras developed elaborate rituals and symbols for those who need them, most of the temple rituals in India being drawn from them. In cases of worship of something outside

the individual self, for example a chosen Deity, an external symbol, such as an image, a picture, an emblem or a geometrical design called Yantra, may be used. In the exercise of this ritualism the worshipper must also practice inward meditation and adoration. Such worshippers are falsely accused by the ignorant of being idolators; but if one will only learn this form of worship, he may perceive for himself what disciplines are involved in the process. As a matter of fact, in this process of external worship there is a wonderful harmony and blending of Jnana (knowledge), of Bhakti (love), of Karma, and of Rajayoga. Sir John Woodroffe, the most satisfactory Western authority on the subject of Hindu ritualism, has correctly explained the matter as follows:

'According to Hindu views primary importance is attached to mental states, for as the Divine thought made the world, man makes his character therein by what he thinks. If he is always thinking on material things and has desires for them he becomes material and is given over to lust and other passions. If on the contrary he has always his mind on God, and associates everything with the thought of Him, his mind becomes pure and divine.' (*Shakti and Shakta*, p. 291.)

As we have already noted, the *Shakta Tantra* teaches the Motherhood of God—God as Shakti or Power which creates, preserves, and dissolves the universe unto Herself. The conception of Mother, indeed, takes many forms, many aspects, and what is experienced as terror and death and destruction is included in Her

play. These then—terror, death, and destruction—are but the obverse of bliss, life, and creation. The tender Mother thus shows Her benign aspect to those who are her votaries, in whatever form or aspect they may worship God. And Divine Mother is to be seen and realized everywhere in the universe. A beautiful prayer occurs in the *Chandi*, a prayer book of the *Shaktas*:

'O Mother, Thou art the embodiment of all knowledge—Wherever intelligence and learning are manifest, there Thou art manifest. All women are Thy forms. Thou dost exist in the universe filling in and through every form.'

Thus spiritual aspirants are taught to look upon all women as the embodiment of Shakti or Mother. She also exists as the inner Being in all forms and objects and things.²

A most important portion of the Tantras is that which deals with what is technically known as Kundalini Yoga. The word Kundalini literally means 'the coiled up'. According to the scriptures, the divine energy remains coiled up or

² It should be noted in this connection that there evolved a practice amongst the *Shaktas* known as *Vamachara*. Its ritual with 'wine and women', apparently a pure sensualism, gained some notoriety amongst the *Shaktas*. If, however, we penetrate a little deeper into the meaning of the accessories used, there will be no ground for condemnation. The symbols of 'wine and women' were employed in order to teach freedom from lustful passions by trying to see the Divine Mother in all things. In course of time, it is true, the spirit was forgotten and degeneration of the whole form of worship ensued. The principle was an admirable one, but in its application it became dangerous and actually evil.

unmanifested within us, but to the yogi's eye it exists within the human body in a form like a coiled serpent. The object of spiritual practices is to awaken this sleeping power in man. There are, the Tantras assert, six centres of consciousness located within the body. These centres are technically known as Chakras, resembling lotuses. So through certain prescribed exercises this Kundalini or Divine Energy rises through the six centres until it reaches the seventh one where there occurs a mystic union with the Supreme Lord who resides in this centre located in the brain. Then it is that one attains transcendental consciousness.

This Kundalini and these seven Chakras or lotuses are not physical but subtle and vital; and the mystic with his divine sight opened experiences them. He experiences various psychic and spiritual visions as his sleeping Energy awakens to full life.

Sri Ramakrishna, who was better able to speak of these experiences from his own personal life than any other, tells of these centres of energy in this way:

'In the Scriptures mention is made of the seven planes of consciousness. When the mind is attached to worldliness, consciousness dwells in the three lower centres, the plexus, sacro coccygeal, sacral, and solar. In such a mind there are no higher ideals or

purer thoughts. The mind remains immersed in lust and greed. The fourth centre of consciousness is the region of the heart. Spiritual awakening comes when the mind rises to this centre. The Sadhaka then has a spiritual vision of the Divine Light and is struck with wonder at its beauty and glory. His mind then no longer runs after worldly pleasures. The region of the throat is the fifth centre of consciousness. When the mind rises to this centre, man becomes free from nescience and ignorance. He then talks only on subjects related to God and grows impatient if any other topic is discussed. He avoids listening to worldly subjects. The sixth centre is between the eye-brows. When the mind rises to this centre, one becomes merged in divine consciousness. There is still left in him, though very little, the consciousness of a separate ego. Seeing the beatific vision of God he becomes mad with ecstatic joy and longs to come closer to Him and embrace Him. But he cannot do so, for there is still a separation. Just as the light in a lantern you seem to be able to touch it, but you cannot, on account of the glass intervening. The centre of the brain is the seventh plane. When one rises to this plane, there is Samadhi. That is the transcendental consciousness, when one realizes his oneness with God.'

He who knows nothing is confident in everything.

Idleness and lust are sworn friends.

If the frog and the mouse quarrel the kite will see them agreed.

If you command wisely you will be obeyed cheerfully.

If you desire to see my light you must minister oil to my lamp.

WHAT MY RELIGION MEANS TO ME

By Swami Bhaswarananda

At this most critical time of our little planet, human suffering has reached its climax. Even an honest and innocent man is not allowed to remain free in his peaceful environment. Willy-nilly he is made to feel the rigours of life.

Bewildered by such painful circumstances, he asks himself, "what is my fate? What place does a man occupy in the scheme of creation? Is there no escape from death, destruction and suffering?"

Answers to these questions constitute my religion. It is not founded on any particular creed or dogma. In my search after the solution of the problems of life, Vedanta satisfied me entirely. I shall now say in the following lines what is Vedanta.

VEDAS AND VEDANTA

Vedanta is the quintessence of Hinduism. The name of Hinduism itself is indicative of no person or prophet whom it can claim as its founder. If any religion is based on any person, there may be a chance of its tumbling down when the history of such a personality is doubted. Hinduism has no such apprehension.

Hinduism derived its name from the river Sindhu which the ancient Persians used to pronounce as Hindu. They used to pronounce 'H' in place of 'S'. The inhabitants on the banks of the river Sindhu (Indus) were, therefore, called Hindus as they migrated southward.

The religion adopted by the Hindus is the religion of the Vedas. There we find what relation exists between individual soul and Universal Soul

between Man and God, between Soul and Matter, and the Creator and the Created. The accumulated treasury of those experiences is called Veda (knowledge). No books are meant by Veda. A Hindu, therefore, may be termed a Vedantist.

EVOLUTION AND REINCARNATION

The present state of human life is the result of a systematic evolutionary process. Darwinian theory of evolution in no way stands in the way of Hindu religious conviction. Long before the Christian era, Hindus developed a conception of evolution of man of which modern theory may be taken as complementary.

In the Theory of Charles Darwin, no mention has been made either of the cause of the tendency of variation of an amoeba in which life principle first manifests, or of the standard of perfection to be attained ultimately by a man. In this respect, Hindu Theory may be said to be more comprehensive than Darwin's. Hindus have not worked out in detail the various intermediary stages of evolution, but they agreed with Darwin as to the validity of such process.

Christians may denounce this theory as detrimental to the Biblical Dogma of creation but Hinduism enunciates it further to understand the Glory of God. Law of Evolution is the law of nature. Powerful nature, external and internal, is the instrument in the hands of the Almighty God. The law of Karma (action) is the soul of evolution.

The birth of protoplasm is caused by its inherent potentiality animated by the omnipotent spirit of God.

The living principle of every being is, therefore, of divine origin. The cause of variation is the urge of this divine power within to manifest. This urge is subject to the momentum of past actions of an amoeba. As in the case of germination of seeds, water cannot be held responsible for the anomalous growth of seeds, so also, God is not responsible for the anomalies that we find in nature.

Every being is responsible for his own happiness and misery. If that is so, where is the place of God in man's creation? Without water seeds cannot germinate, so, without God no creation can take place.

A Hindu asserts that an amoeba has come into being from an infinite past and will go back to the same through the process of evolution. The idea of infinity is involved into the amoeba, a germ-plasm. So it is bound to evolve until it reaches that infinite reality. Creation is without beginning and without end. Nobody can say when creation started. What the Geologists determine by the study of different strata of earth deposits and fossils is nothing but the beginning of the creation of a cycle. One cycle of creation is preceded by another which is similarly the effect of the former. This way no beginning can be ascertained.

If we admit that there was a time when creation began, then the question will naturally arise, where did the manifested energy exist before creation? Either you will have to say that it was in God or it descended from the previous cycle. If it was in God in a potential form, God becomes sometimes kinetic and sometimes potential. But these are the

properties of a compound substance which is subject to decomposition.

God would be subject to decomposition which is an absurd proposition. So, Hindu sages came to the conclusion that God created the sun, the moon and the stars as He created in the previous cycles.

Infinite potentiality involved in a germ-plasm takes millions of cycles before it realises its infinite consciousness. The evolution of this germ-plasm from the brute stage to the state of superman, is the whole history of man. A man with lower propensities and a man of superconscious vision, are the alpha and the omega of this process of evolution. The religious history of the Hindus tells us of the gradual development of man from lower truth to higher truth till he reaches the universal.

GOD PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

Hindu faith in God is a natural outcome of a genuine search for truth. At the very dawn of human civilisation, when man first met with perverse phenomena of nature such as death, disease, enemies and other elemental forces, he made a very vigorous attempt to subdue them.

According to Hindu system of thought, philosophy means "Darshan," a Sanskrit word which means "seeing." Philosophers are those who have visualised the truth. Religion is not different from philosophy and philosopher is not merely an intellectual being. In his life religion is practically demonstrated. His mind soars high in a transcendental sphere where worldly thoughts do not penetrate. This is the summum bonum of human evolution. Realising this state a man becomes free

from all troubles and tribulations of this world.

The first glimpse of truth a primitive man had, was through rituals. In beautiful dawn, brilliance of the Sun, soothing beams of the Moon, dark night, twinkling of Stars, flowering of the fields, he found the play of the Divine. The Spirit animating them was worshipped. Prayers were said with humility and piety before them so that they might reveal their inner secret to their votaries. Oblations were poured in the sacrificial fire, the symbol of purity.

The sky, air, cloud, and earth were all invoked to pour their blessings in season, so that a good harvest may be reaped. Spirits behind the natural phenomena were deified. They were termed gods. The powers of these gods were at last sublimated to one Universal Energy (Supreme God) having the power of Creation, Preservation and Destruction.

He is the substratum of all beings. He existing, everything exists. He is the embodiment of love, knowledge and bliss.

THE NEED OF SYMBOLS

Impersonal God conceived by the human mind has three personal aspects: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer. These forms of the Absolute were illumined in the minds of the Rishis.

In subsequent periods many other forms were added to Hindu Pantheon. They were indispensable necessities of an aspirant in his meditation. Hindus are not idolaters. They worship the ideals behind the idols. Thus multifarious forms of worship came into existence. The

trend of each form, is to have a glimpse of the Infinite. In accordance with temperamental needs which are diverse, these forms vary outwardly.

It is a privilege to every man to have his chosen path. There should be as many paths as there are faiths. Persecution and inquisition are, therefore, unknown to a Hindu. A man can reach his Creator through the help of any of His created things. In the garland of creation He is the Common Thread. As He is interpenetrating all, anything suitable to a man's taste, can be taken as a symbol of worship. He reveals to him who has intense yearning for Him.

JNANA

The paths of realisation, various though they are, fall under four categories, *viz.*, Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma. In the first, reasoning faculty of a man is used for realisation of God in His Impersonal Aspect. By constant discrimination between right and wrong, real and unreal, ephemeral and eternal, good and evil, a man can identify himself with Super-consciousness which is God Impersonal.

BHAKTI

Every man has the sentiment of love in him. This sentiment is made use of in the second path. The emotion of love when directed towards God is called Bhakti. Human affection is not Bhakti. Love for material things deludes a man like a mirage. Love for God annihilates all other petty desires.

A real devotee realises God as Love. He keeps his separate individuality from God in order to taste the nectar of divine love for ever.

He uses symbols of various kinds to exercise his love for the Deity. He superimposes all the attributes of infinite knowledge, bliss, beauty, serenity and love on his chosen form of God. He prays not for money, men, name and fame but for pure love alone. A Bhakta is afraid of none.

This path is very natural and easy. Love for God can be attained through human relationship. It is natural for a son to love his father. God can be worshipped as one's own eternal Father (Santa). A servant loves his master. God may be worshipped as one's own Lord (Dasya). The mother has great affection for her child. God may be loved as one's own child (Vatsalya). A man loves his friend, as his own, similarly God is loved as his own friend (Sakhya).

Love that exists between husband and wife is the most intense of its kind. A devotee thinks himself as the beloved of God, the Lover (Madhura). In this path carnality is eradicated by divinity.

A vast majority of the Hindus belong to the path of Bhakti. When non-essential rituals assume a very huge proportion owing to the accretions of evils, God incarnates Himself to destroy them. Such Incarnations were Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mahammed, Sankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya and in modern time. Sri Ramakrishna.

In the words of Tennyson:

"The old order changeth,
yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many
ways,
Lest one good custom should
corrupt the world."

According to Hindu conception the present cataclysm of the world is caused by accumulation of vices. Unseen Divine hands are working to shape a New World Order to which, I presume, mild Hindus will have to contribute a great deal.

YOGA

Yoga is union with the Super-Self. Yogins are they who apply psychic control as means to their realization. This process is direct. They say, if the Truth is to be realised, it must be sought after in the very human constitution. Herein lies the instrument with which a direct assault has to be made on the target of Truth.

Mind is discovered as the instrument and the strength to be applied is found lying hidden at the bottom of the spinal column. Through deep concentration, this sleeping power is awakened and made to travel through the spine till it reaches the centre of the brain where is seated, on a lotus having a thousand petals, the ideal of perfection (Parama Siva) Ever-Blissful, Self-illuminated, shining as the Effulgence of hundred suns.

In this process, belief in any other Being is not necessary. Perfect self-control and complete dispassion to worldly deeds and thoughts are the minimum requirements. A yogi does not allow frittering away of his energy. Every bit of it is utilised for the attainment of the desired goal. He lives in a very solitary place to practise undisturbed concentration of mind.

To become a Yogi is not an easy task as the general run of men think. Pseudo-yogis may be seen here and there performing magic on public platforms but genuine ones are few and far between.

KARMA

Some men are found lacking in discrimination, mental control and sentiment but they have great predilection for practical work. Karma Yoga is meant for them. They work incessantly with proper attitude.

In this path it is not the amount of work that matters but the quality and the motive power with which a work is done. Work becomes worship when it is done with an unselfish attitude of service. Such a worker does not want anything in return. To him service of man is service of God.

RELIGION IN DAILY LIFE

Hindu social customs are in conformity with their religion. Every action of a Hindu from cradle to crematorium is associated with spiritual motive.

Hindu system of living has been very efficiently divided into four stages, *viz.*, the student, the householder, the retired and the monastic. The first part extends up to the sixteenth year, next up to the fiftieth year and the third till death. The monastic life may be adopted from any one of the above-mentioned three stages.

These four stages of a man's life are not incompatible with the vocation he chooses for his living. Irrespective of vocations each man has the liberty of educating himself in these four institutions. In accordance with the Hindu concept of rebirth which is scientific, the choice of vocation depends entirely upon the predominating tendency a man is born with. These tendencies are different in different persons.

They are determined by the actions of a man's previous birth.

Those who are born with the capacity of higher thinking group themselves as Brahmin. They are introverts with the tendency of renunciation.

Men who have a proclivity towards self-expression by showing their physical valour and heroism engage themselves in the protection of their country. They are called Kshatriyas.

Resources of a country should be in the hands of those who have manufacturing zeal and skilfulness. Through industry they produce things and carry on trade with other foreign countries, to add to the wealth of their own country. They are named Vaishyas.

Men of low calibre and understanding naturally place themselves under the guidance of others. They are called Sudras.

These divisions are made on the basis of capability, taste, quality and action. These four divisions of labour are well thought out by the Hindu sages of yore, for running the social structure peacefully and harmoniously. They were originated with the best of motives but in later days some unnecessary sub-sections were created by those social leaders who wanted to enjoy undue privileges simply on hereditary grounds.

These fictitious sub-sections have no authoritative sanction behind them. They are, therefore, negligible. Original divisions are necessary gradation of a society. There is no human society where such classification does not exist in some form or other.

A scavenger is equally indispensable to a society as a king. A king

should not exploit a scavenger and the latter also should not desire to drag the king down to his level. All privileges must be offered to the underdogs for their mental and spiritual growth. Classes are not so baneful to a society as their abolition and misapplication. Would a civilised man ever like to live in a society where chaos and confusion reign supreme?

Unity in variety is the plan of nature. To live in harmony in the midst of varieties is the prime object of Hindu religious life. To be in tune with the Universal Note of Concord (AUM) that exists behind the discordant sounds of the world is the object of the Hindu's simple life of seclusion. That is why he is not anxious to conquer any other land.

Vedanta has opened my eyes to the Eternal Beauty and Sublimity of the Creator. It has rescued me from the rut of superstition and petty prejudices. It has taught me how to recognise Divinity in every being irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

In the light of Vedanta I am ready to accept all other religions of the world as potent enough to lead their votaries to salvation. For the sake of Truth it is unnecessary for a man to change his faith and embrace another. If you are born Christian, I would advise you to remain true to your faith, if Buddhist, be a true Buddhist and if Mohammedan, follow the Prophet's teachings sincerely. You will see the Light.

Is there any religion on earth which does not preach Unity, Love, Brotherhood, Honesty, Purity, Sincerity and Truthfulness as its

cardinal principles? "I am the chosen man of God, my religion is the only way to heaven, therefore, others should be forced to accept it."—these are some of the silly ideas of ignorant preachers who have created discord and ill-feeling among men.

Vedanta does not prohibit me from the study of truths in whatever books they may be found. It encourages me to see the face of silence in din and bustle of a town. It exhorts me further to worship God in all men and women by alleviating their sufferings—physical, mental and spiritual. I am allowed to say my prayers along with my co-religionists in Churches, Temples and Mosques. My fellowship of faiths is not limited to the annual budget of converts because Vedanta does not believe in mechanical conversion.

A man creates his own world and takes it to be true. If his mind is full of vicious ideas he sees viciousness everywhere. When divine consciousness prevails upon him, he perceives everything pervaded by God.

If a man constantly thinks himself a sinner, sinner will he remain. If he thinks, he is one spark of the Divine Brilliance he will be illumined. O man, shake off the mask of ignorance, the miserable outlook on life will vanish from you immediately.

The vastness of outlook on life, dignity of man, depth of introspection, spirit of tolerance and sympathy, and acceptance of other faiths as true are incomparable features of Vedanta, and I believe, they are the essential factors contributing to World Peace.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Marxism and the Indian Ideal: By Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury. Published by Thacker Spink & Co., (1933) Ltd., P.O. Box 54, Calcutta. Price: Cloth Rs. 3-0-0, Paper Re. 1-0-0. Pages 65.

It opens with these weighty words of Sir J. C. Bose, our great scientist: 'Do not allow the civilization you have inherited from ages past to be destroyed owing to your weakness . . . there is much that India can do if she is willing and prepared to do it, and her greatest service to the rest of mankind will be never to betray her own spiritual tradition allowing herself to be blinded by the cheap outward tinsel of Western life.' The writer continues: 'It is a matter of deep regret that some of our leading countrymen today seem to be bent upon this very betrayal.' In six short chapters the author tries to meet the attacks made upon the spiritual tradition of India by alien-minded writers for some decades. Mr. Roy Chowdhury tries to show that the Scientific Socialism of Marx and Engles is not only incomplete in itself but it militates against the recent results of research in the field of social psychology. He rightly points out that our salvation lies not in pursuing the outworn theories of the West, but in taking, as Sir Radhakrishnan pregnantly states in the Foreword to the book, 'the vision and the thought and the teaching of our seers' and incorporating them in the pattern and the plan of human society. The West is governed by changing political ideals artificially enforced to fit in with circumstances. Class interest and mechanical organizations keep them up; 'but India must evolve social and political organizations suitable to modern conditions following the line of her own genius.' . . . the revolution that is expected from Young India is the bold reconstruc-

tion of our society on the basis of the Vedantic teaching embodied in the Gita'—says the author. The enchanting vision conjured up by New Russia for the labourer has proved disheartening; the old Slav patriotism is revived and what Stalin's Government has achieved for his 'dear fatherland' is to some extent only a return to the glory of Imperial Russia. All question of a world revolution in favour of the proletariat is out of Russia's consideration. The writer betrays ignorance or prejudice when he says on page 50 that Mahatma Gandhi's moral ideas and religious principles are all European, especially of the Russian type. 'The cult of suffering preached by Mahatma Gandhi is taken directly from the Russians(!)' The price of this small booklet is put exorbitantly high.

Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Mankind: By Adhar Chandra Das, M.A., P.R.S. Published by the University of Calcutta. Pages 130.

In the words of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, this is 'a competent work expounding carefully and accurately the central principles of Sri Aurobindo's creed' (Foreword). The first chapter discusses the methods of knowledge and the nature of intuition from a comparative standpoint, emphasizing the contribution of Sri Aurobindo. The great philosopher mystic says: 'If we are to rise to the super-conscious and to possess it in its fullness we must transcend and develop a mode of knowledge in which the subject-object relation vanishes away in a flash of intuition.' Sri Aurobindo's conception of intuition is certainly an advance upon Bergson's view of it. Mr. Das states pregnantly: 'As we rise above the petty interests of life intuition comes to play an important part, for its primacy consists in its disinterestedness . . . Intuition is liberated from

imprisonment in action by reason.' This is in tune with the Hindu conception of intuition.

The Supreme Being as apprehended by Sri Aurobindo and delineated in his writings form the matter of discussion in the second chapter. Alexander's Deity resembles in some respects Sri Aurobindo's conception of the Supreme Being. But our author very clearly and emphatically points out the important differences and discloses the inadequacy of the conception of the former. The next chapter dilates on religion and life in the light of Sri Aurobindo's theories and practices. '..... a religion that is not the expression of philosophic truth', says he, 'degenerates into superstition and obscurantism, and a philosophy which does not dynamize itself with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised.' The fourth and last chapter bears the title 'The Future of Mankind'. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have repeatedly stressed the harmonious culture of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti by all Sadhakas of this age. Sri Aurobindo's synthetic yoga is a systematic and fresh drive for the realization of this great ideal. However, one difference is noticeable. While the former masters did not believe in the perfectibility of the decaying body, the synthetic Yoga of Sri Aurobindo 'professes to attain the perfection of the body and the mind.' If bodily perfection means only physical health there cannot be two opinions.

According to the hoary tradition of India, spiritual striving is always individual and the attainment of the Goal by humanity is effected diversely and at different times. The presence of a large number of perfected or advanced souls, no doubt, determine the eminence of a society at a given time. The simultaneous arrival of all humanity at perfection and striving for that tempting end was not within the comprehension of the ancients. But it is not new to some Western thinkers. The Hindus how-

ever aver that Samsara is eternal, collectively. It is vaguely gathered from the writings of Sri Aurobindo that he lends support to the new view. Mr. Das, therefore, says that Sri Aurobindo himself appears to be full of misgivings. '..... it is very difficult to follow the drift of Aurobindo when he insists on the wholesale uplift of the human race. But if we conceive his scattered writings as a coherent whole and read his books between the lines, we can perceive that this is more a matter of emphasis, and should not be construed into an articulate outlook.' The book on the whole is a luminous introduction to Aurobindoism.

Sri Aurobindo and the New Age:

By Anilbaran Roy. Published by John M. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charring Cross Road, W.C. 2. London. Copies can be had of Sri Aurobindo Library, 16, Sembudoss Street, G.T., Madras. Price Rs. 2-0-0. Pages 170.

A collection of interesting articles which have originally appeared in the *Modern Review*, *The Prabuddha Bharata*, etc., form the body of this book. 'The Ideal of Sri Aurobindo' is the first essay, the gist of which may be read in this passage: 'Only when man finds his true self to be the Spirit in which he is essentially one with all other men and God, there can be true fraternity, and on that basis there can be a reconciliation of liberty and equality. For then everyone will seek the happiness of others as much as of himself, and no one will feel himself to be perfect unless similar perfection is attained by his fellow beings.' What the world needs today is a unity of purpose, a marshalling of all forces of good against all the powers of darkness. But a spiritual oneness which would create a psychological oneness does not depend upon any intellectual or outward uniformity; for such mechanical solutions are temporary and disappointing. 'Religion like all other good and noble things,' justly says the present writer, 'has been

grossly abused, but that is no final argument against its truth and validity.'

A very questionable statement is made when it is said that, 'the phenomena of a great people falling to a most miserable condition. . . . in India today had been chiefly due to the philosophical outlook of the Indians.' What percentage of Indians are philosophers in any sense of the word and which particular philosophy is responsible for social or economic degeneration? If one agrees with Mr. Roy in holding that the philosophy of Sankara has in a sense 'paved the way for the lifelessness and despondence of the Indian people for centuries,' the following questions demand answer: Of the total population of India how many understand the elements of Sankara's philosophy? What number of them behaves actually on the assumption that the world is an illusion? Are the followers of Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, and many other Acharyas, who held the solidly real view of the world, all economically, socially, and vitally superior to Sankara's followers? The miserable condition of India should be traced to geographic, ethnologic, historic, eugenic, and other causes and not to this or that philosophy which is mostly confined to books for centuries.

The second essay is an elaborate criticism of the book which we have noticed some paragraphs back. Since the brilliant author of that book had not 'a close acquaintance with the inner mode and sources of Sri Aurobindo's thinking,' says Mr. Roy, 'certain flaws have been inevitable' and certain gaps have been left which are corrected and fulfilled here. It is hardly possible that there can be total agreement between an independent student and a disciple of a great philosopher or mystic in grasping and interpreting him.

The next essay is on 'Modern Science and Spirituality' which brilliantly sets forth the important arguments in favour of a spiritual conception of the universe as opposed

to the material view prevalent in the present day. Mr. Roy has spared no pains to show that some of the latest findings of science show a definite orientation towards such a conclusion. This section forms the heart of this book. The remaining five essays deal with the five important works of Sri Aurobindo, *The Riddle of the World*, *Bases of Yoga*, *The Divine Mother: As Revealed to Sri Aurobindo*, *The Divine Life* and *Sri Aurobindo and Modern Poetry*, respectively. These appreciative essays give a glimpse into the massive genius of Sri Aurobindo. The book, thoughtful and scholarly as it is, would undoubtedly be an effective check to the flood of pure materialism spreading in India; and therefore it supremely deserves to be read by the educated and intelligent youths of our country.

The Future of India: By Sisirkumar Mitra. Published by Sri Aurobindo Library, 12, Kondy Chetty Street, Madras. Price As. 10. Pages 66.

This nicely printed book contains two valuable monographs, one on 'The Future of India' and the other delineating 'The Influences of Indian Culture.' The first of these is based upon some of the important writings of Sri Aurobindo and presents a true view and appreciation of Indian culture. It deserves to be carefully read by those especially who do not properly appreciate the spiritual heritage of India and far less recognize its importance to her future rebuilding. The author rightly emphasizes: 'It is curious when Indian ideals are permeating the culture of many countries abroad, and are being increasingly admitted by them as influences that exalt and ennoble, and lead to a higher existence, when Europe stands dismayed at the failure of her own culture, we in India should reject our own ideals as "old-world superstitions" and "take up the caste-off clothes of European thought and life, and struggle along in the old rut of her wheels, always taking up today what she had cast

off yesterday". A large portion of this essay forms a string of sparkling extracts from Sri Aurobindo. 'Morality is often confused with religion and spirituality,' says Mr. Mitra; while admitting this, it is difficult to concur with him in the second proposition, 'spirituality has very little to do with it.' Morality is the seed and beginning and foundation of spirituality. That immorality is at antipodes to spirituality is clear from the *Kathopanishad* passage, I: 2.23. Certainly social morality is not spirituality; but there is no spirituality divorced from morality. A spiritual man never makes a false step; the higher consciousness of the realized man is not inferior to morality but superior to it.

The second article contained in the book is a very interesting historical document. It traces in detail the influence of the various branches of knowledge discovered and developed in India and penetrated into vast regions outside during historic times. It is certainly flattering to the present-day Hindu to ruminate over the faded glories of his ancestors. But as Swami Vivekananda has said long ago, the thought of the past ought to fill us with courage and hope for the future. Then this dwelling over the past is certainly valuable, not otherwise. We recommend the book heartily to all who lack pride in the motherland and who seek inspiration for it.

Sri Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings: By B. V. Narasimha-swami. Published by T. V. Chellappa Sastry and Sons, Printers, Publishers, Book-sellers, 11, Sembudoss Street, Madras. Price As. 12. Pages 264.

The name of the late saint Sai Baba is well-known specially in the western part of India. Around him a striking literature is growing. The above book records the utterances of the saint occasioned by the enquiries

of devotees or called forth by certain events and situations. Besides a wealth of spiritual counsels which are in true consonance with the scriptural tradition of India, as has been eruditely pointed out by the learned compiler with the help of various extracts from *Bhagavata* etc., they reveal the personality of the Baba in an astonishing manner. Except by understanding him as a god-man or a Jivanmukta it is impossible to find meaning in many of the sayings and anecdotes; for whenever he uses the first person singular number in a sense of totality there can be no other explanation. The *Gita* is the common example where Sri Krishna uses the 'I' and 'Me' in the sense of Supreme Being or the indwelling Divine Spirit. The Baba declares: 'I am the Attributeless, Absolute, Nirguna. I have no name, no residence.' 'All the universe is in me.' 'Feeding the hungry bitch is feeding me.' 'My age is lakhs of years.' 'My business is to give blessings.' 'As soon as a devotee calls unto me with love I will appear. I require no train to travel.' 'I shall be active and vigorous from the tomb also.' 'All things are mine. I give everything to everyone.' 'Brahman is my father and Maya, my mother. As they interlocked, I got this body. The world is evanescent, mutable, etc.' There are many thrilling miracles in the life of the Baba which have brought solace to the believing; and one who is prepared to believe them has no reason to hold impossible or improbable all that one finds in the Puranas. The book therefore may not impress the critical and doubting minds; but that does not detract from its value to the humble, believing devotee. Besides, there are several advices of great importance in the book which the true Sadhaka may take advantage of. *Yadrishi bhavana yasya siddhir bhavati tadrishi.*

NEWS AND REPORTS

Ramakrishna Mission Cyclone Relief in Malabar and Cochin.

The public are aware of the extensive havoc caused by the recent cyclone in the West coast. Thousands of poor families have been rendered homeless and helpless. Roads and bridges have been damaged and communications badly cut off. The huts of fisherfolk and other poor people have been destroyed. Quite a large number of even pucca buildings and small school houses have been pulled down. Death has been caused by the falling of buildings and trees, by landslides, by flooded streams and by the capsizing of boats and launches. Large tracts of paddy fields and cocoanut and arecanut gardens have been badly damaged and rendered unfit even for future cultivation.

Immediately on receipt of the first news of the havoc, workers of the Ramakrishna Mission proceeded to the affected area and began organising distribution of rice and building materials from two centres, one at Cochin State at Trichur and the other in Valapad in British Malabar, reaching a radius of five miles from each centre. During a period of one and a half month up to July 13 (subse-

quent figures not yet received), the Relief Party working from two centres gave relief to 17,476 persons of 2,645 families in 37 villages. Among these 1,347 families of 11,391 persons got rice only, while 6,059 members of 1,162 families received house building materials and rice. Now work is being carried on from three centres and the workers require Rs. 150 per day to continue the much needed relief work.

The public are fully aware of the services rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission in the past, in this direction, all over the country, and they know that every pie handed over to the Mission will be well spent. So it is earnestly hoped that those who have a heart to feel for the poor would come forward with liberal contributions and spread up this humanitarian work.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged. They may be sent either to the President, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore or to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.

We convey our thanks to all those who have helped so far. Their names are given below:

	Rs.	A.	P.
Through Swami Sambuddhanandaji, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay	..	2,200	0 0
The Madras Provincial Co-operative Bank Ltd.	..	1,000	0 0
Through the Collector of Malabar	..	1,000	0 0
Rangoon Kerala Sangam Cyclone Relief Fund	..	750	0 0
Sheth Nagindas Foolchand Chinai, Madras	..	500	0 0
Raja Ratna Sheth Naranbhai Keshavlal Parikh	..	500	0 0
The Ramakrishna Mission Society, Rangoon	..	400	0 0
Through Kerala Ladies' Association, Rangoon	..	200	0 0
Sheth Chhotabhai Javerbhai, Madras	..	151	0 0
S. Rangaswami Iyengar, Madras	..	101	0 0
The Gujarati Mandal, Madras	..	100	0 0
H. H. The Maharajah Rajendra Deo Singh of Patna State	..	100	0 0
Through Dr. R. Padmanabhan of Sri Ramakrishna Clinic, Kamalashwarampet	..	82	4 0
Sri D. Balasubramanya Iyer of M/s. B. G. Paul & Co. Madras	..	50	0 0
Srimathi Ammu Swaminathan, Madras	..	50	0 0
Sri V. P. Rao, Coonoor	..	30	0 0
Sri Kewalram Chellaram, Madras	..	25	0 0

	Rs.	A.	P.
Gujarati Multani Flood Relief Fund, through Sri Amrichand Nagindas, Madras	25	0	0
Sri Damodar, Madras	25	0	0
Sri Navinchandra Mohanlal Trivedi, Karachi	25	0	0
Sri Vanamali Jee Swamigal	25	0	0
The Ganga Works Madras	25	0	0
Sri Gopinath Pandalai, Madras	25	0	0
Sri Maneklal Premchand, Bombay	25	0	0
Sri Sarabhai Family, Ahmedabad	25	0	0
Sri Burwani Durbar, Burwani	25	0	0
The Superintendent, Lady Willingdon Leprosy Sanatorium, Chingleput	24	0	0
Messrs. Amichand Nagindas & Co., Madras	21	0	0
Sri M. C. Setalwad, Bombay	20	0	0
Messrs. Bapalal & Co., Madras	15	0	0
Kerala Sangha, Secunderabad, Deccan	15	0	0
Sri Keshava Pai, Madras	15	0	0
Sri F. R. Madan, Ooty	15	0	0
Sri Mahesprasad Shyambhavan, Jaipur, Through N. V. Rainanarsan, (Home)	12	0	0
Through P. S. Vaidyanathan, Madras University	12	14	0
Messrs. Rupachand Chhabildas & Sons, Madras	11	0	0
Sri C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar, Madras	11	0	0
Sri Shankarlal Bunker, Ooty	10	0	0
Sri S. K. Swaminathan, Madras	10	0	0
Srimat Swami Siddheswaranandaji, France	10	0	0
Prof. E. E. Speight, Ooty	10	0	0
Sri K. Ramaswami Gounder, Pollachi	10	0	0
Srimati Sundari Bai, Coonoor	10	0	0
Sri T. Gopala Mudaliar, Ooty	10	0	0
Dr. Paramanayakam, Ceylon	10	0	0
Sri T. Nihalchand, Delhi	10	0	0
Sri D. S. Perumal, Ooty	10	0	0
Srimati Anasuya Sarabhai A Sympathizer, Ooty	10	0	0
Mr. L. B. Gasson, Ooty	10	0	0
Collections of amounts below Rs. 10	308	0	0
Total	8,084	2	0

**The Ramakrishna Mission,
Singapore.**

Eleventh Annual Report, 1940.

The work of this Centre is educational and spiritual, and is conducted by the Resident Minister Swami Bhaswarananda, assisted by a monastic co-worker and an Advisory Committee of which the Resident Minister is the president. Regular religious classes and lectures were conducted by the Resident Minister and his co-worker on Sundays and Fridays, both in English and in

Tamil. The preaching and allied activities extended also to Penang, Perlis, Alor Star, Ipoh, Taiping, Kuala Lumpur, Teluk Anson, Johor Bahru, and other outlying localities. The mission maintained a library and reading-room which made available for the interested public, during the reported year, 814 books and 21 periodicals. Among the educational activities of the Centre, Vivekananda Tamil Boys' School with a staff of five teachers and 132 students on roll during the year, deserves mention first. The fact that the school has

kept a high standard of efficiency is borne out by the results. About thirty per cent of the students were taught free, and some other deserving boys were supplied with their educational accessories. Religious instruction and handicraft were also emphasized. A second institution conducted by the Mission is the Afternoon English School for Boys which imparted education up to the sixth Standard; this school accommodated 98 students and had four teachers on its staff. The Saradamani Tamil Girls' School at No. 38, Norris Road, with the help of five lady teachers, imparted education to 132 girls in 1940. Here, too, there were many free students and poor scholars who received help in the form of books and stationery. Sewing, cooking, and physical training formed part of their curriculum. The fourth institution run by the Mission is the Saradamani Afternoon English Girls' School which taught English up to the fourth Standard. It enrolled during the year 96 students, of whom some were taught free of charges. Four lady teachers worked in this school. Besides these, night classes in English and Tamil were also held regularly to impart general knowledge as well as moral and religious instruction to adults drawn from various walks of life. In all these educational institutions no distinction of colour, caste, or creed stand as a bar for progress, or cause of discrimination in treatment. A Students' Home is run in the premises of the Mission where five poor students were given free education and boarding during the reported

year. The Mission Hall was allowed for use by various Associations. The Mission's recreation grounds was freely used for Service Corps' practice and for Air Raid Wardens. First Aid and A. R. P. Lectures were also given in the mentioned Hall. The Young Men's Cultural Union formed on 9th September, 1939, worked successfully in promoting cultural understanding among youths irrespective of nationality. The Mission also celebrated the Birthdays of God-men and saints, and the Navaratri was observed with great festivity. This report also records the progress of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Penang, which runs a Gujarati School for boys, besides the usual Asrama activities there. The report concludes with an appeal for funds for erecting a new building for the Students' Home and the Schools.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevasadan, Salkhia, Howrah.

Report for 1938, '39, & '40.

Through this Centre of service, several orphans, widows, and invalids have been helped with rations, clothing, etc. There is a free Dispensary which gave medical aid to about 13,000 cases during the three years discussed in the report. The Centre runs a Students' Home for College and School students. Each year, from 1938-1940, 14, 16, and 17 students were admitted freely. This branch of the Mission has been able to purchase its own plot of land during the period under notice; but some buildings are to be erected suitable for the various purposes in plan, and funds are needed for it.

If you leap into a well Providence is not bound to fetch you out.
 If you run after two hairs you will catch neither.
 If you would enjoy the fruit pluck not the flower.
 It is a worthier thing to deserve honour than to possess it.
 It is not the gay coat that makes the gentleman.
 Self-conceit makes opinion obstinate.

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DURGA, THE DIVINE MOTHER

Selections From "Durgasaptasati"

THOU dost overspread this universe with Thy power. The power of all the Devas is completely drawn into Thy form. Thou art the Great Mother, worshipped by all Devas and Rishis. We bow ourselves in devotion to Thee. Bless us with all that is good for us.

Thou art the Goddess of advancement (Lakshmi) for those that follow the Law. Thou art the Goddess of ruin (A-Lakshmi) for those that go against the Law. Thou art Discrimination (Buddhi) in the hearts of those that have made up their minds (for the Law). Thou art Faith in good people. Thou art Modesty that comes of good birth. We bow down to Thee, O Devi! Protect the Universe.

Bearing the three Gunas in Thee, Thou art not affected by them. Even Vishnu, Siva and others do not know Thy beginning and end. Thou art the resort of all. All this universe is but a part of Thee. Thou art the Supreme, Unmanifested Prakriti, Thou art the Primal One.

Liberation comes from Thee. What Thou art about, no one can say. The Rishis that seek Moksha or Liberation of the Spirit within, meditate on Thee by controlling well their senses, by following the true and the real only, and by purging all evils in them. Thou art Bhagavati, the Supreme Vidya.

Thou art Wisdom based on knowledge of all Scriptures. Thou art the boat across the ocean of births and rebirths, so difficult to

cross; therefore Thou art called Durga. Yet Thou art void of all attachment.

Thy pure and smiling face, sweeter than the full moon, glows with all the glitter of purest gold. O Thou Supreme Adorable One! Turn now with favour for the work of preservation. We have seen how, when in anger, Thou dost destroy in a moment those that stand against Thee.

To them that please Thee, Thou givest at all times all blessings in life. They are respected by men. Their wealth, their fame, their Dharma and other objects in life do not wane. Blessed become they, their sons and other people, free from danger. He who is thus favoured performs every day such works as are sanctioned by Dharma (or the Great Law, the Plan), and at the end of life, through Thy favour, he goes to Svarga. Thou dost thus give reward even in the three worlds.

When in danger, the heart cries for Thee; Thou dost remove the fear of all people. When Thou art called in peace, Thou dost give such thoughts as lead inevitably to the righteous paths. Thou dost remove poverty, misery and fear. Who else besides Thee has such a melting heart, always full of compassion, doing good to all?

Unthinkable is Thine action, which is death unto the deeds of evil men. Unthinkable is Thine inimitable beauty. Unthinkable is Thy might which kills even those that overpower the Devas. Unthinkable is the compassion Thou showst even to enemies.

Thou art the Supreme Mother! All this is sustained by Thee. This universe is created by Thee. Thou dost uphold it, O Goddess, and Thou dost eat it up at the end (or Pralaya). O Universe-bodied! Thou art identified with the creation, the preservation and the dissolution of this universe. Thou art the Great Wisdom, the Great Maya, the Great Intelligence, the Great Memory, the Great Delusion, the Great Deva Energy, and the Great Asura Energy.

Thou art the most pleasing of pleasing things and most beautiful to look at. Thou art the Greatest of the Great, the Supreme Isvari. O Thou, the Soul of all! whatever exists in the present or future, here or elsewhere, visible or invisible, Thou art the Sakti of all—what more can I say in Thy adoration?

PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, AND RELIGION.

By Dr. Satishchandra Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D.,
Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University.

PHILOSOPHY, by which we mean metaphysics, is an intellectual attempt to rationalize our experiences of supersensuous reality. It has sometimes been defined as 'an attempt to *know* reality as against mere appearance'.¹ But philosophy does not so much give us a knowledge of reality as rationalize the knowledge which we otherwise get of it. All knowledge about realities comes from experience of some sort. John Locke was not fundamentally wrong when he declared that all knowledge had its source in experience. His error lies rather in limiting experience to sense-perception. Sense-perception, which Locke calls 'sensation', does indeed give us knowledge about external objects or physical facts. What he calls 'reflection' is more aptly described as internal perception; and it is a source of our knowledge of internal or mental facts. But sense-perception, whether internal or external, fails to give us knowledge about reality. The objects of sense-experience are phenomenal and not real. They are relative to the organic and the mental constitution of individual knowers and their variable conditions. What we call the same thing appears different to different observers according to their positions and organic conditions. The same tree looks large to a man

standing near by, but very small to a distant spectator. The same food tastes sweet and bitter to the same man in different conditions of health. What we know through sense-perception is, therefore, not the reality of a thing but its changing appearances. The reality underlying appearances or the phenomena of the world is to be known through some sort of non-sensuous experience. To know reality through sense-experience is like seeing a thing through the coloured glass. It does not give us reality as it is in itself, but as it becomes modified by the nature and conditions of the sensibility and the intellect with which we are endowed. We live in a world which is very different from the animal's world because our sense and intellect are different from those of the lower animals. But the reality underlying the phenomenal worlds of human and animal experience is like neither. Reality is being as such and therefore different from the particular modes and specific forms of being which we call objects of sense-experience. If we are to know reality we must have a direct experience of it, which is not mediated by the senses and the understanding. What is given through sense and understanding is sensuous and therefore phenomenal. In this sense, the real is beyond the sensuous and the phenomenal. It is the non-sensuous being which we are to apprehend

¹ Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, I. 1.

through some kind of non-sensuous experience. That there is a supersensuous reality which is apprehended through non-sensuous experience is, of course, not admitted by all philosophers. The logical positivists, like the eighteenth century empiricists, deny the reality of the supersensuous. For them all metaphysical propositions about supersensuous realities are meaningless and non-sensical, since these cannot be verified in experience. If by experience we mean sense-perception, then the logical positivists are right when they maintain that metaphysical propositions cannot be verified in experience. A metaphysical proposition like 'God exists' is certainly not verifiable in sense-experience. None of our senses can possibly testify to the reality of God, Who is admitted to be a supersensuous being. But that there are certain facts other than the sensuous and that we have a non-sensuous experience of them must be admitted by us when we consider our moral and aesthetic experiences. These are anything but sense-experience of sensuous facts. When we judge anything to be right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, our judgment is based not on the perception of sensuous objects, but on the supersensuous experience of non-sensuous facts. The rightness or wrongness of an action, as also the beauty or ugliness of a picture, is not an object of sense-perception like the colour or smell of a flower. Hence we cannot have any sense-experience of such facts. Our experience of moral or aesthetic facts must be

regarded as a non-sensuous experience of non-sensuous facts. To judge the moral character of an action is not to sense a physical quality through any sense organ. It is to estimate the worth of an action in the light of an ideal of self-perfection. To appreciate the beauty of a thing is not simply to perceive a physical fact, but to have an enjoying experience of self-satisfaction. Thus we have to admit certain supersensuous realities which are apprehended by us through some kind of supersensuous experience.²

It follows from the above that a knowledge of supersensuous reality or realities is given by supersensuous experience of some kind. This experience is variously described by those who admit its possibility. Kant describes it as an 'intellectual intuition,' Bergson calls it 'intuition' simply. The former denies that we can have an intellectual intuition of transcendent realities like God and self, the only intuition which we are capable of being sensuous. For Bergson intuition is not only possible but the only method of knowing reality. The same experience is said to be mystical, religious, or spiritual by the mystics and spiritualists. What is common to these different forms of supersensuous experience is the identification of our consciousness with reality. It is a state of pure experience in which consciousness

² For a fuller discussion of this subject the reader may be referred to the writer's presidential address on 'The Indian Conception of Philosophy' in the proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1938.

merely *is* and *is* thus identical with reality or being as such. Philosophy as metaphysics does not give us this experience, but it is based on it. We have the experience or experiences of supersensuous reality in so far as we are spiritual beings and are somehow bound up with the nonsensuous reality beyond the visible world. Philosophy is not a way of experiencing reality but a method of rationalizing our experiences of supersensuous reality or realities. Moral purification, meditation, and concentration are recognized by the ancient Indian thinkers as the necessary conditions for the attainment of these experiences. When we have the experiences, we may speculate on them and make an attempt to rationalize them. Philosophy consists properly in the intellectual attempt to rationalize our experiences of supersensuous reality beyond the sensuous world. One may have genuine experiences of the supersensuous and yet make no attempt to rationally understand or justify them. Such a man may be a great mystic or spiritualist but not a philosopher. Contrariwise, a scientist or a logician may have extraordinary powers of analytic and critical thinking and may bring them to bear on his proper subject. But it is doubtful if they can be regarded as true philosophers unless they possess that breadth of vision and depth of insight which enable one to pierce the veil of phenomena and see the invisible reality beyond the visible universe. It is true that sometimes a critical

and comprehensive study of any subject is said to constitute a philosophy of it. Thus we hear of a philosophy of physics, of grammar, of law and so on. The word 'philosophy' seems to be used rather loosely in such cases. A comprehensive study of physics or grammar or law may be called a philosophy of it by way of courtesy, in so far as it reveals the ultimate principles underlying the phenomena dealt with by one or other of these sciences. But in so far as the ultimate principles of a science are laws governing phenomena and are discovered by observation and experiment or by scientific analysis, it should better be called science than philosophy. If, however, any science or scientist goes beyond the limits of the world of phenomena and tells us anything about the supersensuous reality underlying phenomena, we are to say that the science or the scientist ceases to be such and speaks from a plane of thought which is not its or his own.

While philosophy is the rationalization of our experiences of supersensuous reality, science is the rationalization of our experiences of sensuous phenomena. The first kind of experiences is intuitive or spiritual, the second is sensuous. The second comes through the senses, the first through no sense, but the mind or the self. Philosophy may thus be said to be the rationalization of supersensuous experiences, science that of sense-experiences. To rationalize an experience is to find the reasons for it and to relate it to other experiences of the same or of a different

kind. Science rationalizes sense-experiences by the discovery of their laws, causes, and conditions. Broadly speaking, science explains one physical phenomenon by relating it to other physical phenomena under the laws of space, time, and causality. Observation and experiment are the characteristic methods of science. It recognises only such facts,—things and events, causes and conditions,—as are amenable to its accepted methods. Hence from the scientific standpoint the only causes that are recognised are physical or material. Reasons or ends which are said to be final causes in philosophy are no causes for the strict scientist. This explains also the scientist's inveterate distrust for things spiritual or supersensuous. The scientist spurns the popular beliefs in and the philosophical concepts of God, self, immortality, etc., since these cannot be proved by observation and experiment. Whatever does not come under the law of physical causation and cannot be verified by sense-perception, either directly or indirectly, is for the scientist a matter of blind religious faith or barren philosophical speculation. The limits of scientific study thus coincide with those of the physical world. Science is a systematic study of the physical world and it brings order and unity into our sense-experiences by the discovery of their laws and conditions. But sense-experience does not give us the reality of things. What we get from it are the appearances of their reality in relation to our senses. We cannot remain satisfied

with the knowledge which the senses or the sciences give us about appearances or sensuous phenomena. Somehow or other we have got a conviction that there is a reality underlying the phenomena of the world. There is in us also an irrepressible urge to know the reality or realities beyond sensible phenomena. Philosophy arises when the human intellect is impelled by this urge to know reality and its relation to phenomena. But there can be no knowledge of anything unless we have some experience of it. To know a thing is to understand our experiences of it, and to understand an experience is to know what other experiences are implied by it. If this be so, then the desire to know reality as against appearance must be based on some primary experience of it. Reality is the supersensuous being underlying sensible phenomena. Hence it must be apprehended primarily through some kind of supersensuous experience which may be called intuition or spiritual experience. The conviction that there is a reality behind phenomena is the expression of our intuition or direct experience of it. Philosophy is an attempt to know reality in the sense that it tries to understand rationally our experiences of supersensuous reality. There are three fundamental forms of supersensuous experience; namely, the experiences of the true, the good, and the beautiful. The supersensuous reality is thus understood as the unity of truth, goodness, and beauty. The fundamental

concepts of moral philosophy, *viz.*, those of rightness and wrongness, goodness and badness, virtue and vice, are ultimately based on the supersensuous experience of reality as the Good. Similarly, the fundamental concepts of Logic and Aesthetics have their ultimate ground in the non-sensuous experience of reality as Truth and Beauty. In Plato's philosophy the supersensuous is apprehended primarily as the Good, in Aristotle's as pure Being, in Spinoza's as absolute Substance, and in Hegel's philosophy as the absolute Idea. In a theistic philosophy the supersensuous is interpreted as the unity of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and we have God as the wise creator and moral governor of the world and as the source of all that is beautiful in it. In the philosophy of materialism reality is regarded as unconscious matter and as dead to our moral and aesthetic ideals. In modern realism, especially neo-realism, reality is said to be a plurality of neutral entities which are neither physical nor mental. It may here be said that in materialism and realism there is no belief in any supersensuous reality. But that is a mistake. Matter as reality is not an object of sense-perception, but a supersensuous principle which is supposed to be the ground of all sensuous objects.³ The neutral entities of the neo-realists are not given in any form of sense-experience. They are said to be obtained by the logical analysis of

sensible objects and to be the ultimates in which logical analysis terminates. But an entity which is neither physical nor mental is more accurately described as super-physical and super-mental, *i.e.*, as supersensuous. And it can be known by logical analysis only if we have had previously some neutral (*i.e.*, supersensuous) experience to guide the process of logical analysis. But for some kind of neutral experience in us we could not say, and far less know, what a neutral entity is like. It thus appears that different systems of philosophy are in one way or other based on the supersensuous experiences of reality and give us different interpretations of it.

A system of philosophy tries to rationalize its interpretation of reality by bringing it into relation to the world of our ordinary experience. It tries to show how its idea of reality can be developed into a system of thought which brings complete order and unity into our life and experience. Sense-experiences are more fragmentary and disorganized than scientific knowledge. The sciences give us a more and more systematic and unified knowledge of the physical world. It leaves out of account the world of supersensuous reality and builds entirely upon sense-experiences. But we have other experiences than the sensuous and in the light of these we get the glimpses of a reality beyond physical phenomena. For the practical purposes of our life even physical phenomena may be treated as realities in a sense. In

³ Cf. Lotze, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, p. 44.

philosophy, however, we are concerned not with what is real for a certain purpose, but with what is real in itself. Hence in philosophy there is a criticism of sense-experience and scientific knowledge to expose their defects and inconsistencies. A philosophical study of the world proceeds by way of contemplation of the real and criticism of the knowledge given by sense and science. Contemplation and criticism are the characteristic methods of philosophy. The one enables us to attain deeper and clearer intuitions of reality. The other helps us to repudiate false ideas and beliefs, and justify the philosophical view of the world. A philosophical system cannot be proved by the help of sense-experience or scientific knowledge. To justify it is to show how it explains the totality of human life and experience better than the senses and the sciences. A science does not by itself lead to philosophy. Nor is philosophy merely a synthesis of all the special sciences. The idea that philosophy is a synthesis of the sciences is indefensible. To put together the results of the different sciences is not to attain a view of the world as a whole, but to have an aggregate of scientific truths which may or may not harmonize with one another. Further, the sciences afford no knowledge about the reality of the world. If we were to depend solely on science for our knowledge of the world what we should get is a systematic knowledge about phenomena, and not any philosophy as a metaphysics of

reality. For a knowledge of the physical world we may depend on science, but for a knowledge of the reality underlying physical phenomena we must go beyond science. Hence it is that a philosophical view of the world can be neither attained nor justified by science. That the ultimate reality is spiritual is a philosophical view which cannot be obtained from or justified by science. It is the immediate experience of the supersensible in us that is the source of our belief in the spiritual character of reality. And this can be justified by a criticism of science, which shows how inadequate and inconsistent the scientific view of reality as material is. It is in this way that Hermann Lotze, a great German thinker, explains and justifies the philosophic conception of reality as mind or spirit.⁴ We are thus led to the conclusion that philosophy can neither be said to be a synthesis of the sciences nor can it be justified by them. If we had none but sense-experiences, science should have satisfied us, and the need of a philosophy would not have been felt by us. But that is not to be. We want to know reality beyond phenomena, and so must have a philosophy. It is not science but a criticism of science that can justify philosophy.

While both science and philosophy are the intellectual pursuits of truth, religion is a mode of life. To be a scientist or a philosopher is to think in a certain way and

⁴ See Lotze, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, Pp. 50 ff.

know certain things, but to be religious is to adopt a certain mode of life. Science is an intellectual attempt to know physical phenomena, philosophy is a similar attempt to know reality. Science rationalizes our sense-experiences of the physical world, while philosophy tries to rationalize our supersensuous experiences of reality. Religion is not so much an attempt to rationalize any experience as to attain certain forms of supersensuous experience. It consists in man's effort to attain and maintain the experiences of a supersensible reality and to live a life in conformity with them. It affects and transforms the whole of our life. While science and philosophy make us especially to *think* in certain ways, religion makes us think, feel, and will in certain specified ways. Religion is based essentially on the experiences of a supersensible reality beyond the visible world. While philosophy tries to rationalize these experiences and justify them in relation to the world of our ordinary experience, religion consists in the training of the body and the mind so as to realize the supersensuous in our life and in the world. Moral purification, devout meditation, and renunciation are the keynotes of the religious life. In religion we think of the supersensuous reality as a personal being in whom the highest ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty are realized, and by whom the whole world is created, maintained, and destroyed at will. A sense of mystery attends our consciousness of this being whom we

call God and in relation to whom we have the feelings of awe, trust, and love. Last, but not least, the religious life manifests itself in a series of activities which are calculated to stabilize and perfect the experience of the Divine in us and conduce to the realization of our unity with God. There seems to be a sharp contrast, nay contradiction, between the religious and the scientific attitude of life. The religious man longs to see God everywhere in the world, the strict scientist finds Him nowhere. Science explains the order and unity of the world, if any, by the help of physical forces and laws. The religious man looks upon them as evidences of the working of God in the world. It seems, therefore, that from science there is no way that leads to religion. If the question be asked whether science or religion is true, the answer is that each is true in its own place, and false in that of the other. Science is a study of physical phenomena in the light of our sense-experiences of them. Hence from the standpoint of science, a real cause must be physical, for the senses can give us a knowledge of only the physical. To explain anything scientifically is to refer it to its physical causes and conditions. In the matter of scientific explanation there is no room for the supposition of divine intervention. The Cartesian theory of occasionalism which explains the inter-relation between our body and mind by God's interference is, therefore no real explanation of the matter. But when the scientist has explained things

and events by their natural causes and conditions, we may interpret them in the light of the moral ends which they subserve. Physical causes and laws which explain physical phenomena may themselves be the means for the attainment of moral or spiritual ends. The body, we know, is the physical basis of our mental or spiritual life. While the body may be explained by physical causes and conditions, it may be interpreted as the medium of the self's life and activity. Science is solely interested in the physical causes and conditions of things and events, religion is wholly interested in the moral and spiritual ends which are believed to underlie and guide them. The religious faith in the moral and spiritual values of things cannot, of course, be proved by science. In the matter of moral or spiritual valuation science is of no avail, just as in that of scientific explanation the religious faith is more than useless. But if science cannot prove the religious faith, it cannot disprove it either. We cannot brush aside our genuine moral and spiritual experiences simply on the ground that they do not admit of a scientific explanation. Even a scientist can be a religious man provided he has genuine religious or spiritual experiences. The reason why we have religion is fundamentally the same as the reason why we have a philosophy. It is because we are somehow in touch with a supersensible reality beyond the visible world that we have a philosophy which seeks to know it and a religion through which we want to

realize it. While science gives us a reliable and useful knowledge of physical things and events, it fails to do justice to our experiences of supersensible realities including moral and spiritual values. Both philosophy and religion are centered in these supersensuous experiences. But while the interest of philosophy in them is theoretical, that of religion is practical. The one tries to rationalize them, the other tries to develop and perfect them. Science cannot prove the reality of the supersensuous or of moral and spiritual values, since it is limited, by its very nature, to the sensuous and the physical. Nor can philosophy prove them, if 'to prove' means to deduce from higher premises or to verify in sense-experiences. God or absolute as the supersensuous reality is the highest of all premises which is presupposed in all proof and cannot, therefore, be deduced from anything higher. Nor can we expect to verify the existence of God in sense-experience, since He is the supersensible reality. But if philosophy cannot prove the reality of the supersensuous or of moral and religious values, it can justify them by a criticism of science which shows how the scientific view of the world is inadequate to explain the totality of our life and experience. Science serves the needs of our practical life and philosophy satisfies those of the intellectual life. Religion perfects our moral and spiritual life. All of them are necessary and should be given their proper places in any scheme of life. A justification, if not

proof, of religion comes through a philosophical criticism of science. Philosophy justifies the religious faith in God when it rationalizes our experiences of supersensuous reality in relation to the world of sense and science. In view of this we find some truth in Hegel's statement of the relation between

philosophy and religion, although it is put a bit paradoxically when he says: 'Philosophy, therefore, only unfolds itself when it unfolds religion, and in unfolding itself it unfolds religion'.⁵

⁵ See Hegel, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 19.

THE PRECURSORS OF SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

By Wolfram H. Koch

BEFORE coming to Saint Teresa herself, we must make a short survey of her precursors who influenced her most in her spiritual striving during the formative years of her religious life and monastic training. Their writings were, as she herself says, safer and better guides for her than any of her ignorant early confessors who only succeeded in bewildering and disconcerting her already bewildered and disconcerted mind all the more through their lack of insight and their dogma-bound timidity. Although her originality is far greater than that of any of her Spanish precursors, it nevertheless forms part of that mighty current of mysticism which flowed through the whole of Spain in that period.

The first to usher in the new typically Spanish mystical school, though himself rather an ascetic than an out-and-out mystic, was Fray Hernando de Talavera (b. 1428 at Talavera). He belonged to the Order of St. Jerome and was elected Prior of the Monastery of Santa Maria del Prado near Valladolid, one of the principal monasteries of the Order in

his day. While holding this office he was appointed confessor and spiritual director of Queen Isabella, which office he fulfilled to the greatest satisfaction of both the King and the Queen. After the conquest of Granada, that most mystical city of mystical Spain, he became its archbishop and lived there from 1494-1507, leading the exemplary life of a monk, recollected, mortified, and self-sacrificing. He is said to have preached in such a way, and with so great and irresistible a charm and eloquence, that while expounding difficult and very subtle matters even the most simple old woman understood him as learned scholars and felt the overpowering attraction of his words and of the Gospel he stood for. But as he was always aiming at raising the general standard of the morals of people and prepare them for higher things through the way of purgation, his treatises are rather manuals of asceticism and penance than speculative or mystical writings. Most of them are still extant, the best known and most important ones being: *Breve forma de confesar*

(Brief Form of Confession), *De murmurar y maldecir* (On Backbiting and Speaking Evil), *De vestir y calzar* (How to Dress Befittingly), *Tratado de lo que significan las ceremonias de la misa* (Treatise on the Significance of the Ceremonies of Mass), and *De como se ha de ordenar el tiempo para que sea bien expendido* (How Time is to be Ordered so that it May be Well Spent). All of them were written while he was Prior of Santa Maria del Prado, probably in 1480. They are clear and precise in exposition, and show a great naturalness and ease of expression. His rules regarding food in many respects resemble those advocated by Mahatma Gandhi in our day, as he condemns too much attention paid to the taste and costliness of the dishes, meat-eating, and gourmandism. All food, according to him, should be taken for the sustenance of the body; vegetables generally give greater strength and elasticity to body than meat.

He says: 'It is natural and very reasonable to eat and drink as much as is absolutely necessary for the good health of the body; it is also natural and reasonable that in times of penitence, affliction, temptation, and adversity we should use poor and insipid food to mortify the body. We see by experience that the religious and holy men who do not eat meat and give themselves more to abstinence live in better health and a longer life than others who are given to more tasteful viands, generally considered more strength-giving.'

In spite of their ascetic and moralizing tenor Hernando de Talavera's writings contain flashes of deeper

inner wisdom and insight. Like many other contemporary writings they were meant not for the select few, already well on their way towards the solitary peaks of God-realization, but for the many; and so they had to treat more of the purgative steps than of final absorption in God.

Very similar to Hernando de Talavera's works are the works of Alejo Vanegas or Venegas del Busto. Of his life little is known. He was born in the city of Toledo towards the end of the 15th or at the very beginning of the 16th century and belonged to a poor but aristocratic family. During his adolescence he formed the plan of taking Holy Orders, which he later abandoned to live the householder's life and lived as a well-known teacher and fervent champion of the Spanish language which, in his day, was still despised by most scholars and ecclesiastics. The date and the year of his death are unknown. His best known works are: *Agonia del transito de la muerte con los avisos y consuelos que acerca de ella son provechosos* (Agony of the Passage of Death with the Advice and Consolations that are Beneficial Regarding it), begun in June, 1536, and finished in February, 1537, and *Diferencias de libros que hay en el universo* (Of Different Kinds of Books in the Universe), published at Toledo in 1540. In this work he speaks of four kinds of books: (1) the Divine book containing the science of God; (2) the book of nature which all of us can read and study in the order and harmony of the universe; (3) the book of morals that reveals itself in the depths of our own conscience; (4) the religious book containing the

instructions and commandments of religion, the adoration of God, and the religious cult and ceremonies.

Both works are models of purity of style and of philosophical and theological language, still in the process of formation, as Spanish had been considered wholly unfit to express philosophical or spiritual ideas. The subject-matter of both is somewhat arid in its dry moralizing tone, though highly interesting regarding the customs and ways of life of the 16th century Spain. The writings of Fray Hernando de Talavera as well as those of Alcjo Vanegas del Busto belong to the level of ascetic and moral treatises, as has been said before, and contain but few traces of true mysticism, but in spite of that they prepare the way for the coming unfoldment of Spanish mysticism, the last great spiritual bloom of Europe.

Coming to Alonso de Orozco we enter the domain of real mystic writings combined with an exceptional beauty and transparency of style and lucidity in the presentation of the subject-matter. He was born of noble parents at Oropesa, in the province of Toledo, in 1500 A.D., and made his profession in an Augustinian monastery at the age of 23 after having studied at Toledo and at Salamanca. It is said that one day Our Lady visited him in a dream and commanded him to take to writing. He himself tells us: 'One day, being asleep in our monastery at Sevilla, I saw in my dreams Our Mother most pure, the Virgin Mary, who said to me this one word "Write!", and when I awoke, I said, "O Queen of the Angels, I pray thee, if this vision be true, that

thou wilt assure me of it and command me once more to write." And when I lay down to sleep that same night, I saw Her again, and She said to me "Write!" (from his Confessions). And Alonso de Orozco from then onwards fulfilled this command so conscientiously that he left over fifty treatises of various kinds. He died in 1591 after having lived the simplest and most austere of lives and gained the popular title *el Santo de San Felipe*—the Saint of San Felipe.

His best known and most important works are: *Vergel de Oracion* (Garden of Prayer); *Monte de contemplacion* (Mount of Contemplation); *Desponsorio espiritual* (Spiritual Betrothal); *Historia de la reina Saba* (History of the Queen of Sheba); *De nueve nombres de Cristo* (Of Nine Names of Christ); *Libro de la suavidad de Dios* (Book of the Sweetness of God); and *Regimiento del alma* (The Guide of the Soul).

The following passages are taken from the *Historia de la reina Saba* and the *Monte de la contemplacion* and may give the reader an idea of his way of writing:

'When the soul hears the voice of God, it is filled with joy and its own will becomes annihilated; for thereby the heart is softened and imprinted upon it, as if it were melted wax, is made the understanding of the Lord Who speaks. The soul expands, because her affections grow, and as love grows and expands, all the other virtues increase with it.'

'O Blessed Soul, to whom God thus speaks, neither through angels, nor through preachers alone, neither through books, nor through creatures, but through His very Self! The Holy

King David says thus in a psalm: I shall hear what the Lord shall speak in me. He takes His abode in our heart as of right and from there gives us admirable advice, rebuking our negligences, and inspiring us to progress in spiritual life and practice; for as a captain inspires his soldiers to fight, even so does our Saviour admonish us when He speaks to us inwardly. And here it is needful that our ears be deaf to all the noise of the world, that we close the door firmly to everything and silence our very thoughts; for the voice being low and sweet, it requires great attention and care. "I shall hear what the Lord shall speak in me".

'It is a great thing that the soul which has climbed the heights of contemplation, being still in mortal flesh, can be caught up so as to behold God in His Essence without using the senses as St. Paul affirms of himself. And this is a state midway between that of the blessed in heaven and that in which we live here below upon earth, as St. Thomas says. But although this be so, let us hear the advice of Solomon, "Hast thou found honey, Brother, then eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith and vomit it." Honey is contemplation and prayer. Let each one take that which is sufficient for him with prudence and discretion. Let him not exceed his state and strength. Let him not desire raptures and novel experiences, for into such things the devil is wont to enter as we have seen in our own times. Let the Christian covet no more feelings than those which God is pleased to grant him.'

'But I would tell thee, Brother, that he who is to behold the face of

that most powerful Wrestler, our boundless God, must first have wrestled with himself and be a man that has become perfect in the active life and must have trained himself for a while in the first three degrees of contemplation.'

With Fray Francisco de Osuna (b.?—d. 1540) we come to the age when the greatest Spanish mystics were beginning to write, although their works cannot fall into set divisions. How greatly his *Tercer Abeccadario Espiritual* (Third Spiritual Alphabet) helped St. Teresa can be seen by her own words. She writes in her *Life*:

'When I was on my way to Beccadas, my uncle, who lived at Hortigosa Farm about three miles distant from the city of Avila, gave me a book which is called *Third Alphabet*, dealing with the teaching of recollected prayer. But having read so many good books in my first year (she means the first year of her novitiate) I did not wish to read more because of the harm they had done me. Yet I did not know how to proceed in this prayer and how to recollect myself. So I was very glad of it and determined to follow that path with all my strength. And the Lord having granted me the gift of tears and a liking for reading, I began to have periods of solitude and to confess frequently and to begin following that path, having a book as my teacher, for I did not find a teacher,—i.e., a confessor,—who was able to understand me.'

The copy given to St. Teresa is still to be seen at Avila. Osuna's exposition of the true prayer of recollection led St. Teresa to the state which she calls the prayer of quiet.

Although Osuna spent more loving care upon the daily practical preparation of the spiritual aspirant, and dealt more faithfully and minutely with the dreaded negations of the *via negativa* and the purgative way, he never fell into the net of mere dry logic or lifeless scholarly intellection; neither did he run into the dangers of the whirlpools and chasms of purely emotional raptures. He constantly speaks of the utmost importance of strict vigilance over ourselves and the incessant 'guarding of our hearts' against things and creatures, against all assaults of uncontrolled feeling and of worldly life as a whole. We are asked to be deaf and blind and dumb to the life of sense if we really and sincerely wish to be true seekers after God, and to pass through the dark night of sense, with its emptying of the soul of all that is created, in utter solitariness, as preliminary steps to true contemplation and quietude of heart and mind. St. Teresa learned much from Osuna's warnings against the attractions coming to the novice in contemplative life from interior joys and an intense feeling of sweetness, and from his teaching how to the spiritual aspirant 'all created things should ever be a ladder by which the feet of the wise ascend to God.'

If the *Tercer Abecedario Espiritual* was St. Teresa's guide in the mystic way and the life of contemplation and recollection, the *Arte para servir a Dios* (Art of Serving God) by the Franciscan Friar Alonso de Madrid, was her teacher in the way of psychological analysis and awareness. This manual contains a marvellous description of the whole Christian asceticism with its austere

rities and tortures and all its joys, with many psychological and moral hints of the greatest importance. St. Teresa herself speaks of it in the twelfth chapter of her *Life*, saying: 'In this state the soul can do many acts to determine itself to do much for God and to awaken Love; to help others in the growth of the virtues according to what is said in a book called *Arte para servir a Dios*, which is very good and appropriate for those who are in that state as it cultivates understanding. One can imagine oneself before Christ and accustom oneself to be deeply in love with His Holy Humanity, and to have Him always with oneself, to speak to Him about one's troubles, to rejoice with Him in one's satisfactions, and not to forget Him because of them, without having fixed formulas of prayer, but using words conforming to one's desires and necessity.'

It was no doubt particularly this work which greatly contributed in forming St. Teresa's habit of continual inward attention to all the movements of her heart, of analysing all her actions, and developing an unswerving watchfulness over herself. It also taught to observe the stirrings of her heart into which she enquired and of which she was a master.

Of Fray Alonso's life nothing is known, except that he came from Madrid. He wrote another little treatise of almost equal ascetic and literary value called *Espejo de ilustres personas* (Mirror of Famous Persons). Both his treatises are worth studying carefully even in our day, and may still shed light on the most important preliminary stages

of spiritual life in its contemplative and illuminative aspects.

Another important guide for St. Teresa in her spiritual struggles was Bernardino de Laredo (b. 1482, d. 1540) and his *Subida del Monte Sion por la via contemplativa* (Ascent of Mount Zion through the Contemplative Way), which she studied at a time when she was harassed by many doubts and misgivings regarding the genuineness of her spiritual experience and was trying to understand its real significance. Bernardino de Laredo's description and detailed characterization of the higher states of prayer came to her like redeeming flashes of supernatural light upon her perplexities and desperate self-examination. Unfortunately there is no modern edition of this work, and it is to be hoped that, one day, it too will again be accessible to the general reader like the other writings of the Spanish mystics, as it is in no way inferior to them and neither antiquated nor lacking in practical use and interest.

The following fragmentary quotations may give some glimpse into Bernardino de Laredo's conception of the soul's ascent. He says:

'Sleep as to temporal things signifies little heed for them. Now from the small attention which the righteous soul gives to all things except God there proceeds spiritual sleep, in which the powers of such souls slumber and are infused and transformed into the love of their God, in purity of substance. In such a way does this come to pass that the soul, in this manner of sleeping in its inward quietness, receives the operation of none of its powers, nor has its comprehension to do with any

created thing; for all is then spiritual. To this restful slumber, to this sleep of the soul's powers, to this repose of the soul, to this flight of the spirit in quiet contemplation, to this path of aspiration, it is that the Prophet invites, so that it may take flight in this aspiration and desire that the soul may have wings.'

'This peaceful slumber, this blessed sleep which unites the soul with God was experienced by David when he said in the fourth Psalm: "In the quietness and peace of his secret hiding place, in which God is found within the interior of the soul, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, —in the peace of this my Lord".'

'The soul which is skilled in quiet contemplation sleeps in this way as touching temporal things, and takes so little heed of them; because it is coming so near to God that only for love of Him can it keep from neglecting those things to which it is obliged by charity and obedience and by the bare necessity of satisfying its own genuine scanty needs. Now the neglect of these transient and fleeting things withdraws the soul from all that is transitory as far as its affections are concerned, and the burning desire for eternal blessings raise it to the level of that world which will endure for ever. So the neglect of the present and a desire for the future causes the soul to be, as it were, mortified, asleep, and suspended midway between two domains, to wit, this present death and the life which is to come.'

'Our own part is difficult in the beginning, yet if we persevere with all our might in this raising of our affective nature, we reach that degree of facility at which, as high

contemplatives say, the perfectly trained soul may rise in a moment, as often as it will, to God, and become united with Him through love. It is to be observed that the soul in this state of union—in this rising to God—gives more than its own free will. He who works in it is our God; and as He works again and again with this free will which is offered by the soul, and with its raising of the affective nature, by the inspiration of love which God gives, the soul reaches that state of happiness allowed by our Lord; and even in these times there are those who can affirm and show by means of witnesses how great is this truth.'

It had been Bernardino de Laredo's most fervent wish ever since his childhood to follow the spiritual life in its most rigorous aspect, but being dissuaded therefrom by well-meaning but short-sighted friends he took up the medical profession and graduated as Doctor in the University of his native city, Seville. But realizing that he would never be happy without entering the religious life, he begged admission as a lay brother at the Franciscan monastery of San Francisco del Monte near Seville in 1510. He became noted for his exemplary life of severe and unrelenting austerity and asceticism and for his success and infinite patience and loving kindness in treating the sick, for which his earlier studies had prepared him so well.

Of equal influence on St. Teresa was San Pedro de Alcantara and his famous *Tratado de la oracion y meditacion* (Treatise on Prayer and Meditation). In the thirtieth chapter of her *Life* she says of him:

'The Lord was pleased to remove a great part of my troubles by bringing to this place the blessed Fray Pedro de Alcantara whom I have already mentioned, speaking about his penitence. He is the author of some small books on prayer, which are in great use at present, as he who practised it himself writes with great profit for those who practise it. He kept the first rule of the Blessed St. Francis with all rigour.'

This little treatise on prayer and meditation is essentially written for the common people; but it is of value to all because of its great fervour, lucidness, and wealth of sound advice for the beginner. It was written at La Lana near Badajoz about 1556.

S. Pedro de Alcantara was born of aristocratic parents in 1499 at Alcantara near the Portuguese border. His father was governor of the town. After some philosophical studies in the university of Salamanca he professed in the Franciscan monastery of Manjaez. At the early age of twenty he was made Superior of a newly-founded monastery at Badajoz. In 1538 he was elected Provincial of the Province of St. Gabriel, living in his dearly beloved monastery of St. Michael at Plasencia. After the expiration of his term of office he quietly withdrew into Portugal and settled in a lonely region in the hills of Arabida to establish there a custody (*i.e.* a small group of secluded friars, ruled by a 'custos', given to contemplative life).

He returned to Spain in 1544 and devoted himself to the spreading of the Third Order. After having taken part in the General Chapter of 1553 he withdrew into complete retirement. And it was during this period that

the *Tratado de la oracion y meditacion* was written. Always anxious to re-establish the strict original rule of St. Francis, which he himself followed all his life, he undertook a journey to Rome in order to obtain the permission and sanction of the Pope.

In the final period of his life S. Pedro came into intimate relation with St. Teresa whose religious work and activity were not unlike his own. And she is full of praise for all the help and advice he gave her in the great task of rebuilding Carmel and also individually for her own spiritual struggles. He died kneeling on the 18th of October, 1562, at Arenas, and is said to have appeared simultaneously to St. Teresa, telling her that he was going to rest. During the years of his spiritual and religious activities he used to say: 'My body and I have made a compact. While I live in this world it is to suffer without intermission, but when I reach Heaven I will give it eternal rest.'

A few passages from his best known work are given below:

'Just as there are certain things which help devotion, so there are others which impede it. Among the latter sin is the first, and not merely mortal sin, but venial sins also; for these, although they do not deprive us of charity, diminish the fervour of charity, which is practically the same thing as devotion. Consequently we should be very much on our guard against them, not so much for the evil they work in us, as for the great good of which they despoil us.'

'A second hindrance is the excessive remorse of conscience, proceeding from these sins; for it disturbs and

casts down the soul, frightens it and makes it unfit for every good work.'

'Scruples, for the same reason, constitute another hindrance. They are like thorns, allowing the soul no rest, so that it can neither repose in God nor enjoy true peace.'

'Every kind of bitterness and sourness of heart and unreasoning depression are also hindrances, for one can hardly relish then the taste and sweetness of a good conscience and of spiritual joy.'

'Overmuch worry is a further hindrance. Cares are like the flies of Egypt which distress the soul and prevent it from enjoying that spiritual rest which is experienced in prayer. It is precisely then, more than at other times, that they disturb the soul and turn it away from this exercise.'

'Too many occupations are also a hindrance, for they take up a lot of time, stifle the soul, and leave a man without leisure or heart for Divine things.'

'Pleasure and worldly consolations also hinder a man from prayer. "He who devotes himself overmuch to the delights of the world", says St. Bernard, "does not deserve those of the Holy Spirit".'

'Delicacy and abundance in food and drink form another hindrance and especially long-drawn-out repasts. These are a very bad foundation for spiritual exercises and devout watching. When the body is weighed down and charged in excess with food, the soul is very unfitted to soar aloft.'

'The vice of curiosity in the senses and in the intellect is a hindrance too. Seeking to hear and to see all sorts of things, wishing to have about

one things that are pretty or quaint or wonderfully worked; all this takes up time, embarrasses the senses, disturbs the soul and diverts it in every direction, and thus impedes devotion.'

'Finally any interruption of these holy exercises, unless for a good and pious reason, is a hindrance; for, as a learned writer says: "the spirit of devotion is something very delicate, and once it goes, it either does not return at all, or, at least only after much difficulty. As a tree needs water, and the human frame its regular nourishment, in default of which they wither and weaken and die, so it is with devotion, when the waters of consideration and its nourishing force are drawn away from it".'

'He does much in the eyes of God, who does all he can, though it be but little. Our Lord does not consider so much a man's capabilities, as his good will in doing all that is, for him, possible. He gives much who longs to give much, and does actually give all he has, keeping nothing for himself. It is no great thing to spend much time in prayer, when devotion is slight, but a growing humility and patience and perseverance in well-doing, that is indeed much.'

'On these occasions—that is temporary lack of spiritual consolation—it is also necessary to be more on one's guard than at other times; and more careful, keeping diligent watch over oneself, and with much attention examining one's thoughts, words, and actions. Since we lack the spiritual delight which is our main oar in the voyage, we must make up by care and diligence for our deficiency in grace. "When you come to such

a pass as this", says St. Bernard, "you must realize once for all that the watchmen who guarded you are wrapt in sleep, and that your own sheltering walls have fallen. Your one remaining hope of safety is in your own arms. A wall is your defence no longer, but your sword and your skill in the fight. Oh, how great is the glory of a soul which fights in this manner, defending herself without shield, combating though unarmed, strong though defenceless, struggling alone in the conflict, with nought to bear her company but her own audacity and courage"!'

Coming to the last two authors who were in close touch with St. Teresa and helped her in many ways, we shall first take Juan de Avila, the 'Apostle of Andalucia', as he was called. He was born at Almodovar del Campo in 1500, and entered the life of religion after having studied law at Salamanca and theology at Alcala. He belonged to no religious Order. He had very close relations with Fray Luis de Granada, St. Francis de Borja, whom he converted, St. Ignacio de Loyola, and St. Teresa, and the first mentioned of these great personalities wrote his earliest biography. For a time he was suspected of heresy and suffered at the hands of the Inquisition (1532-1534). His instinctive and experiential knowledge of the individual soul and all her vagaries made him a skilled director of St. Teresa herself, so that she sent him her *Life* for his approval some time before his death. There is a beautiful letter written to her which shows his great respect and at the same time his sound judgment and clear-sightedness in spiritual matters. He died in 1569.

His finest writings are his letters and the *Tratado del Audi Filia* (Hearken, O Daughter). He was a great individual mystic, tying himself to the ground of his own free will, so as to be able to give practical advice to immature souls and help them in taking their first steps towards spiritual life. This practical outlook, which was so strong a characteristic of his, made him, at least partly, an opponent of Osuna's *Tercer Abecedario* which he found dangerous for all those not yet well on their way and who had no deeper experiential knowledge of any higher mystic states.

In his letters he says:

'Alas, we have come to a time when the heart of man has taken the earth for his wife, and how can children for heaven issue from this marriage? The sun cannot be seen except by the light of the sun itself, and God cannot be reached except by the favour of God Himself. He who wishes to rise to heaven, must be of heaven, and the earth cannot rise thither. I think, Reverend Father, we have come to the end of the world; for we have come to the height of sin and forgetfulness of God. I do not know how this harshness and contempt of the word of God and insensibility for the affairs of the soul could still grow.'

'Alas, we are far from God and feel so little pain because of it, that we cannot even be said to feel any at all. Where are the intense upwellings of those souls who tasted God once and then again became a little separated from Him? Where is that which David said: "Surely, I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up to my bed;

I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." And this 'habitation' are we, so long as we do not lose ourselves by getting scattered over diverse things but recollect ourselves in unity of desire and love; for then we find ourselves and we are of God. I think the cause of our half-heartedness is, as someone has said, this: whoever has not tasted God, neither knows what it is to be hungry, nor what it is to be satisfied. That is why we neither hunger for Him nor are satisfied with creatures. We are lukewarm or cold, neither this nor that, neither here nor there, full of laziness and slackness having no taste in the things of God, so that He may reject us, lukewarm servants, whom he does not want. He wants only servants burning with the fire that He brought on the earth. He burned Himself in order that we might burn; He burned on the Cross so that we might take up the wood of His Cross to kindle our own fire and to warm ourselves, and that we might respond to so great a Lover with at least some love, seeing how just it is that we are wounded with the sweet wound of love as we behold Him, not only wounded, but killed by love.'

'Sister, your work and troubles are not great at all, but your love is small. A pound of weight does not weigh much, but a child cries out, "Ah, how heavy it is!" If a grown-up person lifts it, he does not even look at it. Thus, take it for a sure sign that you have but little love if work and troubles seem a heavy burden to you, for if you possessed great love, you would not even look

at them, but would get intoxicated by love so that nothing could separate you from that sweet taste. You would call suffering itself sweet, and get water out of the hardest stone, and honey out of all your troubles. Love, then you shall do no work; but shall pass over all work as a superior being, blessing him who gave you freedom. Should they menace you with death, say that it is most welcome, in order to teach one to enjoy life. Should they menace you with banishment, wheresoever you are, say that you are banished already until you behold God, and that it matters little to you to leave this world from one place or from another. If you possess God, you will be well everywhere. If not, you will be badly off even in your own home. If you find yourself despised, say, Christ is my prize. He prizes me, let all others despise me, so that He alone may prize me. Do not feel sad through the necessity of present things; for you yourself shall despise them to conform yourself to Christ who became man for your sake. What is there that can make you afraid if you are really wounded by the love of Christ? You will humble the evil spirits, you will laugh at all menaces, you will walk with infinite daring among your enemies. Trust in Him who loves all that love Him. In Him you can achieve everything. It is proper that the servants fear the master, the son honours his father, but the wife must love and not fear her husband.'

'Let us awake, let us awake, Dear Sir, before death catches us sleeping! And let us put our hand in the most intimate part of our heart, examine

and search it with candles, for that is where the judgment of God will begin, that being His dwelling place. He said to Ezechiel: *Incipite a sanctuario meo* (Begin ye at my sanctuary). Let us all see in what direction the gaze of our heart is turned. And if it does not look towards its goal which is God, let us sigh and fear and entreat: *Averte oculos meos ne videant vanitatem* (Turn away my eyes that they may not behold vanity). For what is everything under the sun but vanity? And what are all these who love these things, if not as vain as the vain things they love? *Et telas araneae texuerunt, quae non proderunt eis in vestimentum, nec operientur operibus suis* (They have woven the web of spiders. Their webs shall not be for clothing: neither shall they cover themselves with their works. Their works are unprofitable works). *Oculi mei semper ad Dominum!* (My eyes are ever towards the Lord). Let the vain follow their vanities, for they shall perish with them. Pass on to the region of Truth, which shall last for ever.'

Fray Luis de Sarria, the last mystic of those who greatly influenced St. Teresa, was born at Granada in 1504 and is always known by the name of his birthplace. He was a Dominican preacher of exceptional aptitude and brilliancy. As prior of the monastery of Escala Coeli near Cordoba he became first noted for his eloquence and the clear exposition of his teachings. Later, after having taken charge for some time of a newly founded monastery at Badajoz, he became Provincial of his Order in Portugal. He died on the last day of the year 1588 after a long and

peaceful life, free from persecution and anxieties. Each of his works gives a detailed account of the mystic life. He stressed the way of purgation far less than a life of conscious, continuous, aspiration and desire for God and for union with Him; as with Fray Luis de Granada for him the purgative life of the spiritual aspirant was but another name for life itself. He was very strict and unrelenting in his insistence on bodily discipline. All his life his attitude was *nada es lo que nada cuesta*—that which does not cost anything is nothing—and his attitude towards typical ascetic practices and spiritual exercises was that seldom any devotion is found apart from these spiritual disciplines and seldom the spiritual disciplines without true devotion.

His most important works are: *Libro de la oracion y meditacion* (Book of Prayer and Meditation); *Manual de oraciones* (Manual of Prayers); *Doctrina Espiritual* (Spiritual Doctrine); *Introduccion al simbolo de la fe* (Introduction to the Symbol of Faith). Besides these, he wrote a very beautiful life of the Blessed Juan de Avila, full of deep psychological understanding and penetration.

Fray Luis de Granada is perhaps the only one among the great Spanish mystics who approaches nature-mysticism. He loved Nature and everything positive, and was rather averse to the *via negativa*, making the beauties of Nature the high-road to God. He has written most beautiful pages on the sea in his *Introduccion al simbolo de la fe*, pages vibrant with deep emotion and showing an acute sense of perception,

pages in which his whole heart seems to cry out for the One True Beauty behind everything beautiful. In this he was almost a modern Westerner, though he had not lost contact with the deeper, all-important levels of life of which all the manifold allurements of Nature, her poetic charm and grandeur, are at best the visible expressions, and at their worst the snares which keep man bound and prevent him from following his higher destination.

We shall take leave of these mystics with a few passages on the unitive life taken from Fray Luis de Granada's *Memorial de la vida cristiana* (Memorial of Christian Life).

'When a man in this mortal life reaches so high a degree of love that he utterly despises all perishable things, taking unlawful content or pleasure in none of them, but fixing all his joy, love, care, desire, and thought upon God, and this so constantly that always or almost always his heart is set on Him alone—for in Him alone he finds rest and apart from Him none—when in this way a man is dead to all things, and alive only to God, the greatness of his love triumphing over all other affections, then he will have entered the vaults of precious wine of the true Solomon, in which, inebriated with the wine of this love, he will forget all things, —even himself, for His sake.'

'I see well that only few can arrive at such a spiritual state when the necessities of life, the requirements of justice, and even charity calls us many a time to leave God, if we may speak thus, for God Himself. But still I write of this that we may see the end towards which we

have to journey as far as we are able; for even though none can reach it, those who press forward with all heart and intent towards higher things will come nearer than those who set a limit to their desires at a lower level.'

'Of this matter a wise man says: In everything good we must desire the utmost possible, that at least we may arrive half way. And with this will and desire St. Bernard said, "May my soul, O Lord, die not alone the death of the righteous, but the death of angels"—that is to say, may it be as dead to worldly things, and as far removed from them as not only the righteous but the angels are, if that be possible. For the most ardent and burning desire has not to reckon with its own strength, nor to know bounds, nor to measure itself with reason, nor to desire only what is possible for it looks not at what it can but at what it wills to do.'

'This is the love which in mystic theology is called "unitive" because its nature is to unite the lover with the object of his love so that apart from it he finds no repose, and on it therefore has his heart ever set.'

The period of the full bloom of Spanish mysticism was a period of great spiritual hope for the West, just as the earlier and even more intense one of the so-called heresy of the Albigenses, which, though non-Christian in nature, bore seeds of a mighty spiritual unfoldment that was destroyed by the ruthless worldly power of the Church of Rome who felt the approaching danger to her absolute rule over the conscience and faith of the people and thus took timely measures to kill the bearers of the new message that had suddenly

cropped up no one knows from where. It is a sad matter for reflection how humanity all through the ages has had to pay again and again for its repeated betrayal of the spirit and the great Incarnations, the great beacons of love sent to man through the grace of the Divine in order to help him in his quest for happiness and truth.

'Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble, thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'

—FRANCIS THOMPSON

By more and more taking, partly through Protestantism, to the Path of Pursuit, the West lost the clear distinction between the way of the world and the way of the spirit and made so-called human progress the pivot round which all its endeavours and hopes and fondest dreams began to turn. It lost the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount and of almost all deeper sayings of Christ in a shallow humanitarianism and thereby more and more came to a compromising and half-hearted interpretation of the Incarnation it outwardly professed and still professes to follow. But for the Spanish mystics, as for their Indian brothers and sisters, renunciation and self-denial for the sake of God are the beginning, middle, and end of all true spiritual life; and spiritual life itself is life in its reality.

Renunciation and self-denial have to be practised by all, by the monk as well as by the householder, not for the attainment of worldly progress, but as a discipline. The whole mind of the aspirant, be he a monk or a householder, has to be given to the Divine alone in perfect non-attachment to personal relationships and to all objects of sense. So one is reminded of Sri Ramakrishna's saying regarding the teaching of the Bhagavadgita that if the word 'Gita' is uttered a number of times in quick succession it becomes 'tagi' or one who has renounced. If the contents of the works of the Spanish mystics could be condensed into a few words, these would be renunciation, passionlessness and love for God, and unconditional self-surrender to the Highest. But renunciation for the sake of God does not mean lethargy or passivity; but it means awakening the sense of instrumentality in man in the hands of the Highest where-with and whereby to achieve the end and ultimate aims of life. And the sense of instrumentality in man can never be attained without the purgative action of spiritual disciplines.

For those Westerners whose spiritual sense can only be awakened or vitalized through the Christ-ideal (especially so for the Protestant section of Christianity) a sympathetic and minute study of the practical advice embedded in the writings of these mystics might be of great value. These counsels may help to reform their all too superficial and all too outwardly practical idea of religion.

The Path of Pursuit, morals, humanitarian activities, social work, and charitableness can never be a substitute for religion. But there can be no true spirituality which does not imply all these. They are helps and servants of spirituality. Spirituality is utter self-denial; that is the end and aim of Religion. As Sri Aurobindo in one of his sayings beautifully puts it: 'The meeting of man and God must always mean a penetration and entry of the Divine into the human and a self-immergence of man in the Divinity.'

Let us end this short survey with one of the fervent prayers of Fray Luis de Granada:

'Who, O Lord, is all my well-being and my final goal but Thyself? Thou art the goal of all my journeys, the one safe harbour of my voyages, the crown of all my desires. What can man desire that is not found in the ocean of Thy goodness rather than in the wretched and muddy pools of creatures? Foolish lovers that love the shadow and despise the substance, that go to fish in dirty pools and forget the sea! May I love Thee, O Lord, with the straightest and most fervent love. May I stretch out my arms, all my affections and desires, to embrace Thee alone! The ivy clings to its tree in every place so that the whole of it seems to be throwing out arms to grasp the tree more closely, for by means of this support it mounts on high and attains what to it is perfection. And to what other tree but to Thyself must I cling that I may grow and attain what I lack?'

INDIA—ARISE !

By Swami Ramdas

THE time has arrived for India to conserve and release her immense spiritual power to counteract a mighty destructive force which is striving to subdue and dominate the human race. India is a land of many religions and has given birth to a galaxy of saints and sages. The divine heritage which has been handed down to the present generation from India's hoary past is abounding with infinite possibilities for good. India is the mother who fosters under her care various races and faiths. The time has come when the children of this sacred soil should rouse themselves up and unite in peace and harmony for invoking Divine help and grace for extinguishing the blazing conflagration of war which is causing incalculable disaster and havoc in the world.

Real political, social, and economic progress and freedom in the life of nations can depend only upon the spiritual awakening of mankind and the realization of its unity. The recognition of the spiritual values of life can alone knit people with people and bring harmony and goodwill on the earth. The liberation and peace of the individual is surely based upon his or her contribution towards the collective human happiness and harmony.

Every man and woman is a storehouse of inexhaustible spiritual energy. Only this latent energy has to be made manifest. India must give up her indifference and lay aside her lesser preoccupations and stand up united in the glory of a divine revelation to guide mankind along the path of mutual co-operation,

love, and goodwill. The spiritual Power is omnipotent. The way is to propitiate and raise the Power and make it shed its beneficent light and peace upon mankind. India should purify and elevate her heart to make it throb in unison with this universal Power—God. Prayer is the most efficacious means. Let a tremendous wave of pure and selfless devotion and aspiration rise from the heart of India towards the immanent and transcendent God. India knows fully the miraculous power of prayer. All the more wonderful is its work when it starts simultaneously from the hearts of millions for achieving a world-unifying purpose. For, prayer releases an invincible Divine Power that stands for righteousness, harmony, and peace. World adjustment along various other lines have been tried without abiding results. True and lasting peace and freedom of humanity can be possible only when its affairs are controlled and set in the light and realization of the inner Spiritual Kingdom which is at the basis of this world manifestation.

Now, what is the practical course to be adopted by India to utilize for the good of humanity her latent spiritual potentialities? People of all religions and sects in India can join, in their own way, in this great and urgent task of conquering the de-humanising spirit of hate and greed rampant in the atmosphere of the present day, and of disseminating the soothing grace of Divine Love and Kindness. Let a day in a week be appointed on which congregational or individual prayers are offered to the Almighty in every temple, mosque,

church, Ashram, Math, and home. In this universal prayer let Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Parsis and others freely participate. God of all religions is one—the same Merciful Master of the worlds. Appeal to Him with a heart longing for the uplift of mankind is bound to bring about a transformation in its outlook and illumine its mentality. Prayer purifies, softens, and ennobles the human heart. By its power we can certainly avert the impending world-catastrophe. We hear of the wails of countless human beings in the throes of agony in the battle field of Europe and elsewhere. A veritable orgy of slaughter and bloodshed is going on, on a vast scale. Humanity has suffered long and suffered intensely. Let every heart melt in the fire of this terrible dance of death and reveal the glory of the

Spirit so that His grace and power may prevail on this earth to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. It is high time for God to come to the rescue—God seated in the heart of mankind—God of peace, compassion, and love.

Let every Indian dedicate the enlightened powers of his or her head and heart for liberating the world from the grip of strife, war, and misery. Now comes the clarion call to India to make a great spiritual endeavour to stem this Asuric tide that threatens to engulf the entire mankind, and instead to usher in the era of peace and goodwill among the nations of the earth. By the Divine Grace all things are possible. May God guide India and use her as an instrument to fulfil His plan of regeneration of mankind.

COWPER'S PRAYER

'O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort, to Thy will,
And make Thy pleasure mine.

'Why should I shrink at Thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?

'No, let me rather freely yield
What most I prize to Thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold from me.

'But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to Thy sway;
Else the next cloud that veils my skies,
Drives all these thoughts away.'

WILLIAM COWPER

SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

By Swami Yatiswarananda

OUR human personality consists both of good and evil. The evil is to be eliminated step by step and the good fostered. In the course of the evolution of the soul, the dormant good and evil come up. The aspirant should face the reality and should try to control lower manifestations and stimulate the higher expressions of life. Let us profit ourselves even by our mistakes, and instead of brooding over them too much, let us strengthen ourselves and avoid their recurrence, by all means in our power. Let the slip make us humble and more and more dependent on the Divine, Who is the real source of our strength and support. When we turn to Him, we become conscious of our Divine nature and feel purity and sublimity. When we draw ourselves away from Him, we become more ego-centric and fall away from the higher path. Instead of taking our stand on the ego, let us surrender to the Divine and make Him the centre of our consciousness. And then ethical and spiritual life becomes easy. We should have more of prayer, Japam, and meditation when the lower tendencies come up. And we should be more calm than at other times.

Everyone in the East or in the West has to pass through struggles. In the East the spiritual and ethical culture has been maintained in an unbroken way. This helps some aspirants, no doubt, but there are many who do not profit by it at all.

During the course of the soul's progress, instinctive goodness passes through conscious goodness, with

struggle, and then to natural goodness without any conflict. So conscious struggle is a stage in our evolution and does not necessarily mean a set-back. This however does not justify all forms of back-sliding.

Partial success in our moral and spiritual life should give us an incentive towards greater and greater success, but it should never make us think that perfection has been attained. It means that although we have made some progress in purifying ourselves by controlling our lower nature and tendencies, much of the impurities and evil tendencies are still here and are to be controlled and finally eliminated.

All along the period of our ethical struggle and spiritual practice, we must have an abiding faith in our potentialities, in our capacity to move nearer and nearer to our goal. But we should never take the potential to be actual, unless it has been fully realized in life, unless it has brought about a complete transformation in our thoughts and activities.

We should always bear in mind, that with the money we get in dream, it is not possible for us to buy food and appease our hunger in the actual, empirical world.

The strength of a chain is to be judged by the strength of its weakest link, and so our capacity to stand evil company or association is to be judged by the response we make towards it during our weakest moments. We should therefore be on our guard, trying to protect ourselves as much as possible, from evil influences, and should also put forth every

effort to strengthen the weakest links in our character through right thinking and conduct, through self-analysis, prayer, and meditation.

We must also try to intensify our faith in the Divine Who, as Sri Ramakrishna very aptly says, comes towards us ten steps, if we try to move towards Him one step. The mother allows the child to be busy with its play to go on with it, but she has to rush towards the child who is tired of play and has begun to cry for the mother and crawl towards her. Such is the case with His devotees who want to approach Him in their weak, human ways.

We sow wind and have got to reap it as whirlwind. All the suppressed whirlwinds will come up. All the bad pictures lying hidden in the mind will get developed sooner or later. We have got 'to face the brute'; see things as they are, and then see the Divine in all things. In Him is all this play of Maya going on, hiding Him altogether from view. We have got to see through this Maya. Our spiritual practices which include also the performance of duties develop a sort of mental X-rays by virtue of which we are able to see the phenomenal nature of things and also the Reality appearing as the phenomenon.

It is a hard and long struggle which appears to be never-ending. The more we advance, the subtler and stronger becomes this struggle. And in the course of the merciless self-analysis we have to pass through, most awful things are revealed—things to which ordinarily we give big, high-sounding names.

All our so-called selfless relationships and human feelings and senti-

ments are more or less based on self. Even our love for God, devotion for God-men and affection for fellow-devotees are to a great extent based on selfish considerations. But at the root of all these, there is always a Divine element which is mixed up with much of non-divine things. The gold is to be separated from the dross. This is the task in spiritual life.

By noticing the different elements in our sentiments and also the reactions of those sentiments on the mind and the centres of consciousness, we can very often find out their true quality and value. Feelings associated with the higher centres become noble and elevating, while, if they come to be connected with the lower centres, which naturally imply lower thought-planes, they may be debased into passion of the worst kind. Hence we must be always on our guard during our association with people. And men and women, as you know, are not always what they seem. The more we study ourselves and others with greater scrutiny, we realize this fact, sometimes to our sorrow.

Really speaking, we have no security on the plane of mere sentiments however essential they may be for the evolution of our soul. Our feelings must be based on Divine Consciousness and also connected with it. Then alone do we get real stability and become free from fear. Of course we can attain to this ideal only by proceeding step by step, by passing through many a failure and defeat.

Simply by giving up this world physically, we cannot become pure in thought, word, and deed all of a sudden. First we avoid the deed and then the word, though the second is

more difficult than the first. The greatest difficulty lies in attaining purity in thought. This is the case as long as we remain on the plane of relative morality (in which both good and evil are realities); but we try to avoid the evil and bring in the good. Owing to the old tendencies and impressions, the evil wants to slip in and sometimes succeeds in coming in. With an effort of the will we have got to replace it by the good thoughts. This tug-of-war is inevitable in every case. Only as we advance, the struggle becomes subtler and subtler. Having risen above the plane of gross or crude forms of good and evil, we have to deal with their subtler forms.

During all these struggles both on the gross and subtler planes, we should try to dwell on the holy thoughts as much as possible and thus drive away the unholy ones. But sometimes the imagination grows morbid and the unholy pictures become very vivid in spite of ourselves. In such a case while repeating the Holy Word, and trying to think of the Holy Thought, we should take the position of a 'witness', a spectator towards the evil thoughts, and detach ourselves from their entanglement.

During moments of forgetfulness we may identify ourselves with the evil thoughts and feel affected both mentally and physically, though not actually doing the bad. But as we become more and more watchful and practise non-identification, we can keep them at a distance, even when they make their appearance before us.

Under certain circumstances it is not possible to prevent the rising of

the thoughts, but through practice one can look upon them as one would do in the case of a mirage, the unreal nature of which one has already found out. The phenomenon cannot be stopped, but it may be seen just as phenomenon, something having the semblance of reality, but truly unreal in its nature.

And in order to realize the unreality of the phenomenon of names and forms, we must try to see the Divine, to think of the Divine at least, lying at its back. As we succeed in recognizing the Divine principle at the back of all physical forms, we are able to remain really unaffected by them. If in the course of the struggle one cannot help feeling more or less affected by them, one should not brood over the lapse, but try to think of the Divine as much as possible. Even if one is defeated, one should say with Swami Vivekananda:

'Unending battle--

That verily is His sacred worship.
Constant defeat, let that not unnerve thee,

Shattered be little self, hope, name
and fame.

Set up a pyre of them, and make
thy heart a burning ground.

And let the Mother (Shyamia-Kali)
dance there.'

One should realize more and more the immensity of the spiritual struggle. Simply by remaining in a nice mood for some time we do not solve our spiritual problem. It is like having a pleasant dream. It is very good to have such elevating dreams. Put through it we must realize the superconscious state that transcends the waking, the dream, and the dreamless sleep. Let us always remember Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the

'Wood-cutter and the holy Man', and move onward and onward, till we reach the ultimate goal.

The Lord's grace is on us, though

we do not deserve it. May He protect and guide us all in the midst of all our strivings and struggles, and take us nearer and nearer to Him.

THE MONKEY AND THE PITCH-TRAP

From "Some Sayings of the Buddha"

'In Himalaya, king of mountains, brethren, there is a tract of land that is rough and hard to cross, where neither monkeys nor humans do resort. Likewise there is a tract where monkeys resort, but not humans.

There are tracts, brethren, in Himalaya, tracts of level country, delightful spots, where both monkeys and humans do resort.

In those spots, brethren, hunters set traps of pitch in the monkeys' tracks to catch the monkeys. Now, brethren, those monkeys who are free from folly and greed, on seeing that pitch-trap, keep far away from it. But a greedy foolish monkey comes up to the pitch and handles it with one paw, and his paw sticks fast in it. Then, thinking "I'll free my paw," he seizes it with the other paw; but that too sticks fast. To free both paws he seizes them with one foot, and that sticks fast. To free both paws and one foot, he lays hold of them with the other foot, but that too sticks fast. To free both paws and both feet, he lays hold of them with his muzzle, and that sticks fast.

So, brethren, that monkey, thus caught in five ways, lies down and howls, a prey for the hunter to work his will upon him. So the hunter spits him and prepares him for eating there and then over a charcoal fire, and goes off at his pleasure.

Just so it is, brethren, with one who roams in wrong pastures that are beyond his range. Wherefore do ye not so roam; for Mara seizes him who roams in pastures that are beyond his range: Mara seizes his chance, Mara seizes his opportunity.

Now, what, brethren, is a brother's wrong pasture and range? It is the fivefold strand of sensual delight, to wit: shapes cognizable by eye, shapes desirable, charming, delightful, and dear. Also shapes tangible by body, shapes desirable, charming, delightful, and dear, endowed with pleasantness and prompting to desire. That, brethren, is the wrong pasture that is beyond a brother's range.

Do ye, brethren, roam in pastures that are your own, keep ye to your ancestral bounds: for, so roaming, Mara does not seize a man. Thus Mara does not get a chance, gets no opportunity.

And what, brethren, is that pasture that is your own ancestral range?

It is the Four Stations of Mindfulness. What four? Herein, brethren, a brother abides contemplating body, ardent and self-possessed, mindful and restraining the covetousness and discontent that are in the world. And so does he abide contemplating feelings, mind, and ideas. That, brethren, is a brother's pasture, his own ancestral range.'

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THE BHAGAVADGITA

By Kumar Pal, M.A.

THE *Bhagavadgita* is a complete manual of Yoga. The word 'Yoga' is used to denote different disciplines and views in the different chapters of the book. In some places it stands for Karmayoga, in others for Patanjala-yoga, Bhaktiyoga, Sankhyayoga, Sanyasayoga, etc. We get four outstanding definitions of Yoga in the words of the *Gita* itself; namely, *Samatvam* (II: 48), *Karmasu Kausalam* (II: 50), *Yam sannyasam iti prahur yogam tam viddhi* (VI: 2), and *Duhkha samyoga viyogam yogasamjnitas* (VI: 23). The first implies undisturbed equanimity of mind when it is brought into contact with pairs of opposites like pain and pleasure; the second is that skill in the performance of work by which one relinquishes the fruits of actions and transcends their good and evil effects; the third definition implies renunciation of the formative, self-assertive, passionate will and the desire for worldly objects; the last statement declares that true 'Yoga' is that state of absolute harmony in which one is not ruffled by the greatest sorrow. The word *yukta* brings out the real sense fully.

This harmony demands a perfect balancing and co-ordination of the various functions of the mind as well as the individual mind and Society. The two are interdependent. Discord in any of these spheres leads to neurosis and to flight from reality. Lack of self-control and mental feebleness would result as a consequence. Yoga is the remedy prescribed by Sri Krishna for all such

defects. The Psycho-analyst classification of psychological types into extroverts and introverts and the sub-divisions based on willing, thinking, etc., remind us of the three-fold classification of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti in the *Gita* based on Jnana, Jeeha, and Kriya, the functions of the psyche.

This Triyoga of Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma is now very familiar to us. Its importance was first of all emphasized by Lord Krishna. This triad is based on the Gunas or aspects of Nature, viz., Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Though generally held to be the attributes of Nature, they are really the characteristic properties of all in Nature. Even the Absolute Reality, is not immune *in a way* from this threefold clutch, if looked at *from the human standpoint*. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas appear in the Brahman as Chit, Sat, and Ananda, respectively.¹

It should always be borne in mind that classifications and divisions are convenient artificialities. Like the immutable, indivisible, partless Brahman the individual mind also is one whole. These three Gunas of Prakriti, are so inextricably mixed up, (*aviveki*, as the Samkhya-karika calls them), that it is hard even to distinguish them in the blend. All of them necessarily co-exist. They are not separable but distinguishable relatively by the predominance of one over the others.

Western thought for long confined itself to cognition and did not

¹ *Devibhagavata* VII: xxxii.

much study desire and action. In old Greek philosophy and later European thought, down to about the middle of the 18th century a bipartite classification of mental faculties into 'active' and 'receptive' was in vogue. Since Kant the tripartite division has been speedily growing into recognition and with the further implication that the three represent not as many separate faculties but inseparable functions or *vrttis*. Very different names have been proposed for the three: intellect, feeling, volition; thought, emotion, conation; will, feeling, intelligence; thinking, feeling, willing; cognition, affection, conation; wisdom, love, will; wisdom, power, will, etc.

Character and life too may accordingly be viewed from this viewpoint. Just as one moment may be dominated by either cognition or emotion or action, so also one may, for most of the time of his life, be led by any of these. The predominant mental function or Guna may make one's temperament intellectual, emotional, or active; Jnana-pradhana or Sattvika, Iccha or Bhavana-pradhana or Tamasic, and Kriya-pradhana or Rajasic. Corresponding to these the whole of the Veda has been partitioned into Jnana-kanda, Upasana-kanda and Karma-kanda. Similarly three ways of life have been prescribed, Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Karma-yoga. Some persons, stress the importance of Dhyana-yoga also. But this is subsumed under Jnana-yoga or is at best the auxiliary for all the three. An individual who is predominantly cognitional would be successful as an intellectual, Jnani. The man of desire and emotion would be sensitive and devotional, Bhakta.

And the man of action would be active, Karmi. These are the three attitudes one of which everyone is bound to assume, in life, though there may be many undifferentiated, mixed, and unclassifiable individuals.

Prof. G. D. Higginson writes, 'Man very early developed towards the world in which he lived three somewhat different attitudes or frames of mind: The attitude of use or the hand, the attitude of appreciation or the heart, the attitude of knowledge or the head; the practical, the feeling and the understanding mood marking off the man of science with his intellectual imaginativeness, from the practical man of affairs and the artist.' (*Fields of Psychology*, p. 2). He further employed the terms 'doing, feeling, and knowing' for these attitudes, which are the recognized equivalents of the Sanskrit words Krya, Iccha, and Jnana.

Freud also unquestionably subscribes to the above threefold distinction of temperaments while discussing philosophy of life in his *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, p. 40. He observes, 'The mental constitution of the individual will play a decisive part aside from any external considerations. The man who is predominantly erotic will choose emotional relationships with others before all else: the narcissistic type, who is more self-sufficient, will seek his essential satisfaction in the inner workings of his own soul; the man of action will never abandon the world in which he can essay his power.'

Freud writes in continuation of the above, 'When any choice is pursued to the extreme it penalises itself, in

that it exposes the individual to the dangers accompanying any one exclusive life-interest which may always prove inadequate.' Wisdom would admonish us not to expect all our happiness from one quarter alone. The Jnanayogi necessarily performs his duties to guide and help others. He must act with Sraddha (*Gita*, III: 20, 25; IV: 39). The Bhaktyogi may find it easy to make headway in his spiritual progress by devotion to the Lord, but he can attain success only when he has really known the Lord, (XVIII: 55) and works for the good of all, (XII: 4, V: 25). The Karmayogi too must be wise (IV: 25, 26), knower of reality (IV: 28), knower of the whole (IV: 25), and also perform his duties with zeal (VI: 47), though he is exhorted to act without attachment. The difference is merely of preponderance of each element. This Tri-yoga is a special legacy of the *Bhagavadgita* to the Indian thought and is the bulwark of liberalism in India even today.

Let us now revert to the technique proper which we are to follow according to the *Gita*. The first step, consists in the determination of the temperamental type of the person. A normal person should select his ambitions and goals according to his mental and physical constitution and with a view to his special personal environment. But the neurotic fails to comprehend his abilities, capacities, and necessities. He fixes false ends (Ishta), imposes impossible obligations (Dharma or Kartavya), and strains his nerves in such pursuits for which he is totally unfit (Paradharma). Hence the second task of the analyst must be to find out the individual's 'style of life' in Adler's

words. This would lay bare the nature of the whole problem, the root of the maladjustment, and forthwith indicate the solution as well.

In all cases a fundamental unconscious conflict is revealed, which was unknown to the individual. The ideal or the task to which the suffering individual sets himself is found to be antagonistic to his hidden real nature. His ideals are at loggerheads with his desires and impulses. The super-ego is at war with the id. The poor ego is at a loss to see what to do, and knows not its own good or bad. In despair the individual surrenders himself to one who can guide him. It was in such a distracted state of discomfort and helplessness that Arjuna seeks the help of Lord Krishna and exclaims, 'O Lord, my heart is weighed down by despair, my mind is confused as regards my duty. I am thy disciple and implore thee to teach me and decisively state as to wherein lies my good.' (II: 7).

What then remains for the psychoanalyst is to resolve the conflicts and doubts (Samsaya or Dharma-sam-moha), and recommend a course of life which may establish a compromise between the warring forces in the mind. The complexes and the fictitious ego-ideals being made conscious, the tension disappears. Realizing the inconsistency of the two, the individual has to find a conscious solution of the issue in the given conditions. If the desires and passions are impossible, that is, if the reality is far in advance of the individual's cravings, the patient must replace the unconscious repression by a conscious suppression of the primitive wishes. This is called Manonigraha and Nirodha. If on the

other hand, his desires are all too powerful for this, and he adopts an unsocial attitude in pursuance thereof, then his mode of life should be so changed as to provide some sort of satisfaction for his unconscious desires in keeping with the social needs and his ego-ideals. Or the ideals may be incompatible with his personality and the social situation. In that case they have to be abandoned and the individual given his right role.

When Arjuna, fearing his responsibility, resorted to inactivity, Lord Krishna came for his help and held a free discussion on equal terms with him. Arjuna laid open his heart before him and related his difficulties frankly. Lord Krishna got at the real crux and assuming the role of a superior—first as a teacher and then as a God incarnate—exhorted Arjuna to carry out his duties unflinchingly, without any tinge of attachment, and with firm faith in the Divine guidance.

The discourse with Arjuna is however, only a pretext for the enuncia-

tion of the truth. The *Gita*, in fact, has served and will serve as a torch-light for the benighted travellers of all ages groping in the dark and disappointed on all sides. Therein Lord Krishna suggested many advisable ways of life for differently constituted individuals, according to their psycho-physical nature. He recommended Karmayoga for a man of action like Arjuna and Tilak. He advised Jnanayoga for a man of knowledge like Sankaracharya and his followers. And he appeared as emphasising the supreme importance of Bhakti to Sri Ramanuja, Sri Vallabha, and others. The *Gita* delivers the message of love (Premayoga) for Sri Chaitanya and others. For the *Gita* is only an exhortation for complete self-surrender, and devotion, Saranagatiyoga, as it is called by some. There are other methods of Dhyanyoga and Abhyasayoga for others. The Adhyatmayoga was enjoined for the philosophically-minded alone.

It is chiefly due to this universal eclecticism that the *Gita* has won the admiration of all.

One cannot realise Divinity by reading books. There is a vast difference between book-knowledge and realisation. After realisation all books, sciences and scriptures seem to be like worthless straw. It is necessary first to make acquaintance with the landlord. Why are you so anxious to know beforehand how many houses, how many gardens, how many stocks and bonds he possesses? If you ask the servants, they will not tell you, nor will they notice you. But if you can once become acquainted with the landlord, by whatever means, you will learn about his possessions in a moment, and the servants then will bow down to you and honour you.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

ACROSS THE CENTURIES

By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.

HISTORY, they say, repeats itself. This need not mystify us. Behind every historical event, underlying every major happening in the career of humanity, is a universal law which is eternally true. Given therefore the same circumstances and the same human material, a past incident cannot but repeat itself. This is true not merely of political and economic history, but also of religious history. Here is an interesting example.

Let us transport ourselves on the wings of imagination to a period twenty-five centuries back and to a land beside the Himalayas. In Kapilavastu, the Sakya capital, there is rejoicing. Prince Suddhodana, through his queen Maya Devi, has been blessed with a son and heir. The child has come trailing clouds of glory. Great things are predicted of him. Many are the visitors to the palace. Among them is a sage:

Mongst the strangers came
A grey-haired saint, Asita, one
whose ears
Long closed to earthly things,
caught heavenly sounds,
And heard at prayer beneath his
peepul-tree
The Devas singing songs at
Buddha's birth.
Wondrous in lore he was by age
and fasts;

Him, drawing nigh, seeming so
reverend,
The King saluted, and Queen
Maya made
To lay her babe before such holy
feet;
But when he saw the Prince the
old man cried
"Ah, Queen, not so!" and there-
upon he touched
Eight times the dust, laid his
waste visage there,
Saying, "O Babe! I worship! Thou
art He!"

(Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*.)

Let us come down to the latter part of the nineteenth century. We see in the place of Asita a youthful saint, the heir to the wisdom of all sages,—Swami Vivekananda. In the place of the child Buddha, we see a picture of the baby Christ. And history repeats itself.

To the Swami (Vivekananda) it was only natural, therefore, to refuse, out of reverence, to give his blessing to a picture of the Sistine Madonna, touching the feet of the Divine Child, instead: or to say, in answer to an enquirer, "Had I lived in Palestine, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, I would have washed His feet, not with my tears, but with my heart's blood!"'

Sister Nivedita in
The Master as I Saw Him.

It is the property of fools to be always judging.
He is never alone that is in the company of noble thoughts.
He that overcomes his passions overcomes his greatest enemy.
He who repeats the ills he hears of another is the true slanderer.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sri Ramakrishna and Spiritual Renaissance: By Swami Nirvedananda. Published by The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. Price Rs. 2-0-0. Pages 308.

The above book is a reprint from *The Cultural Heritage of India* after necessary revision by the author. It is divided into four sections; in the first section we get an able survey of the background against which the great spiritual luminary, Sri Ramakrishna, arose. The two sections that follow depict the part played by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the spiritual renaissance of India. The book concludes with the vision of future India, and the new spirit brought to play with the advent of the two great personalities mentioned above. To state briefly, the book is a critical review of the recent socio-religious movements of India and a penetrating study of the lives and universal message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. 'It pointedly brings out the significance of the New Revival in the Cultural history of the nation as well as its contribution to the future of humanity.'

Tonics to the Soul: Published by The Swami Vivekananda Sabha, Dharapuram, Coimbatore Dt. Price As. 3. Pages 48.

This is a booklet which every young man and woman of India ought to read. Under the headings 'Strength', 'Service', 'Self-Control', 'Sacrifice', 'Sraddha (Faith)', and 'The Call to India' a beautiful bouquet of the luminous and animating utterances of Swami Vivekananda are woven in it. Three poems of the Swami also find distinctive place in this publication. We hope and wish this quintessential form of the Swamiji's message will be welcomed and cherished by all.

Sufism: Ancient Knowledge of Man: By Peer Bawa. Published by The Sufi Movement of Ceylon, Elysium, Lady Manning's Road, Kandy. Price 15 cents. Pages 29.

Sufism has many features in common with Vedanta. This booklet gives a brief outline of the subject. The translation from the original ought to have been more idiomatic and readable.

Grave Danger to the Hindus: An address by 'An obscure Hindu'. Published by the Harbinger Office, Puthiyara. Price Re. 1-8-0. Pages 274.

The startling title gives an inkling of the spirit in which the whole book is written. It covers an extensive ground and gives several suggestions to all who have to play a part in the amelioration of India. The author precisely places the finger on the weak spots of the Hindu society. It is impossible to consolidate the people of a vast continent except under two conditions: either there must be impending external danger threatening the existence of all, or there must be an enlightened obedience of the parties to certain principles and ideals which all hold to be equally acceptable. At present in India both are absent. Hence divisions and differences are inevitable. In such circumstances silent and intense constructive work by the various social groups through the line of least resistance alone appears to be practicable; nothing else can pave the way for an actual consolidation of the entire nation in the future. The moment we get independence, some assert, all differences and rivalries will cease and fortune will smile on us; but unless there is unity in aspiration, independence cannot even be dreamt of, declares the opponent. Both are right; but where to begin? Want of education,

or want of the proper type of education where there is some education, is the cause of all our troubles. The present writer's spirited appeal deserves to be carefully considered. Reading this book one cannot, however, help thinking that the 'obscure Hindu' would have better served the noble purpose of his book had he been more sober in his tone; if so, he would not have had to address from behind a mask also. The tit-for-tat attitude to any other community is not the peaceful way for making up differences. If the Hindu Social Body is sufficiently nourished physically and morally, it need not fear any harmful bacteria. At any rate, the book sheds light on many obscure corners and tackles many urgent problems.

Sri Krishna: His Life and Teachings: By M. R. Sampatkumaran, M.A. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price As. 12. Pages 160. (Crown 8 vo.)

This is the latest in G. A. Natesan & Co.'s series of Life and Teachings of the world teachers. It gives a brief description of Bhagawan Sri Krishna's birth, stories of His Childhood, life in Brindavan, contests with gods, killing of Kamsa, blessing of Kuchela, founding of Dwaraka, life with the consorts and the Pandavas, relation with Arjuna, resuscitation of Parikshit, and the doom of Krishnis, taking the viewpoint of a sympathetic student and not a hostile critic. On the other hand, Mr Sampatkumaran makes a laudable attempt to meet the hostile critics by patient investigation and sober arguments. Two short chapters are devoted to the study of Sri Krishna's teachings and the worship of Krishna respectively. All the facts discovered regarding Sri Krishna's historicity are marshalled in a neat and scholarly chapter. The author does not omit to mention how Sri Krishna has figured in Indian literature through centuries. There are several appropriate citations from previous

writers on Sri Krishna, among which those from Sister Nivedita and Dr. Annie Besant are specially noteworthy. The book on the whole gives a perfectly sane picture of Sri Krishna in a brief compass and may be safely recommended as an introduction to all who wish to study that great life.

The Veerashaiva Weltanschauung: By Shri Kumaraswamiji, B.A. Published by Mr. V. R. Koppal, M.A., B.T., Navakalyanamath, Dharwar. Price not stated. Pages 29.

Here appears in print an address delivered by Shri Kumaraswamiji, a scholar Sannyasi of the Veerasaiva sect, at Adyar, in one of the sessions of the sixteenth Indian Philosophical Congress. It is a laudable attempt to present to the modern world the salient features of Veerasaiva Philosophy in the light of Western metaphysics. Attempts have been made to interpret Saivism of Kashmir and Saivasiddhanta of Tamil land to the modern mind. Little has yet been done to bring to light in the modern way the Veerasaiva Philosophy cherished by over forty lakhs of people in Mysore and part of Bombay Presidency. The present attempt of the Swamiji to interpret this beautiful philosophy is a very welcome attempt. We wish more such books devoted to the study of the original writings of Sri Basava and his noble disciples, which are mostly in Kannada, come to light in suitable form. This brilliant monograph deserves to find a place in all religious and philosophical libraries.

Bharatasara (Sanskrit): By A. M. Srinivasa Acharya, 22, South Mada Street, Triplicane, Madras. Price not mentioned. Pages 144.

This pocket book contains about 700 verses selected from the 'Santiparva' of the *Mahabharata*, our inexhaustible source of wisdom. A selection always helps to focus attention on the essentials and the present

one is a very valuable one in so far as it gives several immortal and life-giving ideas to edify the reader. Whoever wishes to live a higher life would do well to inscribe in his heart the precious thoughts contained here and persevere to practise them. A verse on page 10 reads: 'This body of a Brahmana is not for the enjoyment of sense pleasures; it is for the

performance of austerities with all discomforts so that he may attain peerless happiness hereafter'; on page 96: 'Tapas is a lamp; noble practice is the means of virtue; knowledge is the supreme end; and Sannyasa is the best austerity.' It is a pity that such selections are not more widely used in Sanskrit classes in schools.

NEWS AND REPORTS

OBITUARY

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, LL.D., N.L., joined the majority on August 7, 1941. His eightieth birthday fell exactly two months anterior to that date. We share along with the whole country the sorrow at the loss of our great poet. A gigantic genius of his stamp is the proud asset of any great nation for all times. Undoubtedly he occupied the front rank along with the world's best creators of beauty in words and forms, sounds and colours. Rabindranath's versatility was marvellous; his art did not therefore confine him to delightful poetic dreams. Poets, it has been wisely said, are the best educators of the world, and his title to that position is pre-eminent. The Visvabharati is as original as his best artistic productions. Our Nobel Laureate's cultural mission perhaps outshone his artistic productions. In him the artistic genius of ancient India has embraced the present-day world interlocked by speedy communication. No wonder he is cherished and admired in distant corners of the world not only as a great poet but also as India's illustrious symbol of international love and goodwill. Dr. Tagore's reverence for, and appreciation of, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have found worthy expression on more than one significant occasions. He was among those assembled in the Brahmostava celebrated at Kasiswar Mitra's house in 1883, where Sri Ramakrishna was also invited.

As a lofty genius who has won the admiration of the entire civilized world, as a lover of the oppressed of all nations who has so powerfully voiced the need for freedom, as a great internationalist who knew no barriers of caste, colour, and regions, and as an implacable hero who has held aloft the honour of the motherland diversely throughout a long, fruitful life—may his illustrious example inspire generations to come! May his soul rest in Eternal Peace. Om Santih, Santih, Santih.

* * *

In the demise of Swami Parananda on August 16, 1941 and Swami Ganeshananda on July 25, 1941 the Ramakrishna Mission has sustained grave loss. For over a quarter of a century Swami Parananda had been promoting the interests of the Ramakrishna Movement in the Travancore State in various ways. A Sannyasi of distinct abilities, Swami Ganeshananda was instrumental in the establishment of a High School for girls, a vocational training centre for boys, a Students' Home for the poor, a charitable Dispensary, and a library for the benefit of the rural population at Diamond Harbour. May their souls rest in Divine Peace. Om Santih, Santih, Santih.

**Sri Ramakrishna Math, Karachi
A Short Report of its Activities
for the Year 1940**

Sri Ramakrishna Math at Karachi, started by Swami Sharvanandaji in 1934, has now completed seven years of its existence. The Math was situ-

ated in rented quarters for the first two years; in 1936 it acquired a permanent site and buildings through the generosity of the public of Karachi and Sind. In 1937 a two-storeyed building with a beautiful shrine was erected by a devout Seth of Karachi. Ritualistic worship and chanting of the sacred Sanskrit texts are done daily in the shrine. In the hall below religious gatherings on special occasions and weekly meetings in the summer are held. The Math has a growing library which preserves at present a collection of more than 500 religious books that are used by the public.

Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, the Holy Mother, and other great religious personalities are duly observed in the Math. In the birth anniversary meetings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda held in the Math premises, Prof. L. H. Ajwani, M.A., Prof. A. Duarte, Ph.D., Rao Bahadur Jagatsingh, Swami Govindananda, Prof. Jethmal Parsram, and Principal S. B. Junnarkar spoke on their life and teachings. Articles in Sindhi and English on the life and message of the Holy Mother were published in local papers on her anniversary day. Preaching tours in Hyderabad, Shikarpur, and Sukkur were undertaken by the resident Swamis and lectures were delivered by them in different parts of Karachi city.

A Gita Recitation Competition among the Sindhi school boys was held and a Silver Cup was presented to the best competitor. Regular classes were held for the public in Hindi and English thrice every week on the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Upanishads*. Every Sunday evening a religious class was regularly held, and on every Ekadasi day Ram Nam Kirtan was sung in the Math. Two Sindhi booklets on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were published by the Math. Three Swamis and one Brahmacari of the Ramakrishna Order permanently reside in the Math to conduct the activities of the Ramakrishna Math

and Mission at Karachi. Other monks of the Order also went for short stays.

Spiritual instructions were given to one and all who cared to have them and practise religion. Special attention was paid to personal problems of spiritual life as well as to the discussion of important philosophical topics by private interviews.

Medical Relief. The Free Homeopathic Dispensary at Barnes Street, Ramaswami Garrikhata, in charge of a qualified Homoeopathist, continued providing medical relief to all communities. The total number of cases treated in the year under report was 9,930. A good number of cases declared hopeless was cured by the Dispensary doctor, as a result of which people suffering from chronic diseases such as Sciatica, Rheumatism, complicated female diseases, etc., mostly from the upper strata of society, came from all parts of the city for treatment. The doctor continued to visit the Bhil village at Clifton once a week and rendered free medical aid to the villagers. During the latter half of the year, however, the visits were discontinued as the health of the villagers kept good and the visits were not necessary. Besides the Municipal grant of Rs. 250 per annum, Rs. 125 per month, at least, are necessary by way of subscriptions and donations to maintain this activity of proved utility.

Mass Uplift Work: (a) The Ramakrishna Mission Bhil School, Clifton. The progress of this school during the year under review was satisfactory. The average number of pupils attending the school was 24 boys and 11 girls, in all 35.

(b) There is a night school for adults where Bhajanas, Lantern lectures, and gramaphone music are provided for them.

(c) There is another night school at Kumbharwada mainly for the training of the primary teachers whose number for the year was 16.

In connection with the Rural Uplift work at Clifton the Mission appeals for a fund of Rs. 10,000.

Shivananda Vidyalaya

We notice with pleasure the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home and Shivananda Vidyalaya, Kalladiuppodai, Batticaloa, for the year ending February 28, 1941, issued by Swami Nishkamananda, General Manager of schools run by the Ceylon Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission. The above Vidyalaya and other schools play an important role in the educational sphere of Ceylon. The nomination of the Principal of this Vidyalaya to the Board of Education bears out this fact.

The high percentage of success justifies the reputation which the Vidyalaya has earned by its quiet efficiency. In the course of the year which the report considers several additions have been made to the Botany laboratory. Thirty-five new

admissions were made to the Vidyalaya at the beginning of the year, and the number on rolls at the end of the year was 148. Physical training, Games, Natural Science Association, a Manuscript magazine, the Historical Society, Library and Reading Room, Oriental Studies—all these measures have considerably helped the mental and physical development of students. The Students' Home provides free boarding, lodging and education for needy and deserving children. During the year the total number on the rolls was 39. The whole life of the Home is centred round the shrine attached to it and this has immensely helped to awaken in the students religious thoughts and inclinations at an early age. The boys are encouraged to manage the Home chiefly by themselves. The Home is badly in need of funds; the Vidyalaya also requires immediate help to set up the Chemistry laboratory.

How some people give all their energies, time, brain, body, and everything, to become rich! They have no time for breakfast! Early in the morning they are out, and at work! They die in the attempt—ninety per cent of them—and the rest when they make money, cannot enjoy it. That is grand! I do not say it is bad to try to be rich. It is marvellous, wonderful! Why, what does it show? It shows that one can have the same amount of energy and struggle for freedom, as one has for money. We know we have to give up money and all other things when we die and yet, see the amount of energy we can put forth for them. But we, the same human beings, should we not put forth a thousandfold more strength and energy to acquire that which never fades, but which remains to us for ever? For this is the one great friend, our own good deeds, our own spiritual excellence, that follows us beyond the grave. Everything else is left behind here with the body.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

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**SWAMI BRAHMANANDA:
THE SPIRITUAL SON OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA**
By Swami Tatiswarananda

EARLY LIFE

RAKHAL CHANDRA GHOSH, for that was the name by which Swami Brahmananda was known before he embraced the monastic life, was born in 1862 in an ancient village near Calcutta. He lost his mother at the age of five. His father who was a rich land-lord, and married a second time, made good arrangements for his education. Young Rakhal was attentive to his studies and took part in many games excelling his play-fellows in physical strength.

His charming face, strong, healthy body, and winsome manners endeared him to all. Even in his boyhood he showed signs of uncommon spiritual predilections which grew with the advance of years.

He was married in his teens to a sister of a prominent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, through whom he first came to his beloved Master.

MEETING WITH THE MASTER

Just a few days before Rakhal's first visit to Sri Ramakrishna in 1881, the Master had a vision in which he saw the Divine Mother of the universe placing a good-looking boy in his lap, saying: 'This is your son'. Sri Ramakrishna came to understand that the boy would be to him a son only in the spiritual sense, and was destined to help him in fulfilling his Divine Mission for the good of mankind. At the very first meeting the Master recognized the boy.

He saw other visions about him also and was convinced of his unique spiritual nature. He used to speak of his disciple as one of the rare ever-free souls born for promoting the welfare of the world.

TRAINING AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S FEET

Very intimate was the relationship between the Master, and the disciple.

Rakhal used to come as often as possible to the temple at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, to meet the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was ever mindful of the spiritual growth of the disciple and never hesitated to admonish him whenever he thought it necessary. He took Rakhal step by step along the spiritual path and helped him to grow in spirit along with the other disciples.

We get a glimpse of the Master's training from the words of the Swami himself: 'Sri Ramakrishna never used to spend the night in sleep, nor would he allow the young devotees who stayed with him to sleep long. When others had gone to bed, he would wake up his disciples, give them definite instructions and send them . . . for meditation. They would spend the whole night in Sadhana (Spiritual practice) as directed, and take rest during the day.' (*Spiritual Teachings* by Swami Brahmananda, p. 73).

Of all the fellow-disciples Rakhal lived most closely with the Master. During his stay with him at Dakshineswar he used to look after the personal comfort of Sri Ramakrishna and would also accompany him to the houses of devotees. But sometimes he would remain in such a highly abstracted spiritual mood that in place of his attending on the Master, the latter had to look after him.

The divine touch of the Master awakened the dormant spiritual consciousness of the disciple. It freed his mind from desires and passions and gave him most glorious visions of God.

While sitting in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna along with other

disciples, he could be seen repeating the name of God silently and meditating on Him with a great intensity of the soul.

As early as 1882, the young disciple was seen to enter into spiritual ecstasy, forgetful of the outside world altogether. Once remarking about him, the Master said (in 1884) 'He has now attained true discrimination between the Real and the unreal. He will no longer be attracted by the world. He may live at Dakshineswar or at home or wherever he pleases.'

RAKHAL AND THE BROTHER DISCIPLES

A few months after Rakhal's meeting with the Master, came Narendranath who later on took the monastic name of Swami Vivekananda. Other disciples followed them and about the middle of 1885, the chosen group was almost complete. Narendra—the greatest of them all—became the natural leader. Common allegiance to the wonderful personality of the Master, community of spiritual ideals, and mutual love and regard slowly brought the disciples together, unconsciously forming them into a spiritual brotherhood. And one day Narendranath said to his fellow-disciples: 'Let us hereafter call Rakhal our Rajah (King).'

They accepted the leader's decision. Narendranath then went to the Master and told him what they had done. At this Sri Ramakrishna was greatly pleased. Rakhal—the 'spiritual son' of the Master—was destined to be the spiritual Head of the Order that was then in the making.

THE MASTER AND HIS DISCIPLES

In April 1885 Sri Ramakrishna came to get what is known as 'clergyman's sore throat' which later on developed into cancer. Many of the young disciples headed by Narendranath began to stay with the Master, devoting their time in the service of him and in spiritual practice and philosophical discussions. The disease of the Master aggravated but he watched the disciples more keenly than ever, gave them the necessary instructions in spiritual practice and urged them to lead the life of perfect self-control and Divine Realization. One day he gave Narendranath, Rakhal, and others the ochre cloths of the monks. On another day he asked them to take the begging bowl and beg their food from door to door. The Master trained the disciples for the monastic life and himself laid the foundations of what later on came to be known as the Ramakrishna Order, destined to perpetuate and carry on the great mission for which he was born.

The ideal he placed before them was not one of pain-hugging, morose, and 'dry' asceticism. Sri Ramakrishna—the God-intoxicated man—was full of wit and humour also. At times he would have most lively jokes and fun with his young disciples and would make them rock with laughter. And probably the next moment he would take up some spiritual topics and transcend the world of senses, losing himself in the height of ecstasy and blessedness. Really speaking, to the Master, spiritual life did not imply tension and strain, but was one of natural and spontaneous joy and beatitude—a fact remarkably

manifest in the greatest of his disciples, including Narendranath and Rakhal.

Besides, the Master's ideal of a true spiritual life was not a self-centred one; but was one of fellowship and brotherhood, of spiritual realization and selfless service, an ideal which he installed in the minds of the disciples. He gave them, further, a deep insight into the intricacies of human nature in which Rakhal excelled all the others. The Master taught them also how to be practical in their everyday life, and prepared them for the great task they were to perform in later life. He specially trained Narendranath to be the leader. And having transmitted to him his unique spiritual powers and given him the charge of the disciples, he passed away in an ecstatic state in August 1886.

AFTER THE MASTER'S PASSING AWAY

An intense spirit of renunciation and God-realization now seized the souls of the disciples. The first Monastery of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna was soon started by Narendranath and others with the loving help of a prominent householder disciple of the Master.

Rakhal who had gone to northern India for the practice of penance and meditation, joined the monastery giving up his wealth and family for serving God and Man. Under the leadership of Narendranath, the young monks formally performed the ceremony of initiation into the monastic life and took appropriate monastic names.

Rakhal became Swami Brahmananda (Bliss of Brahman—the Infinite, All-Pervading Spirit). In

the company of Narendranath, their chief, the young monks practised great austerities and strenuous spiritual disciplines along with intense study. A tremendous yearning for Self-realization possessed their souls. Living on the plainest of foods they spent hours in devotional songs, prayers, and meditations. With his gigantic intellect Swami Vivekananda discussed with his fellow-disciples many and various topics of religion and philosophy, history and science, thereby widening their mental horizon and intensifying their spiritual life.

After some time the ideal of the wandering monk dominated their hearts, and one by one almost all of them, except the devoted Ramakrishnananda who took charge of the Master's relics, left the monastery, wandered from one place to another, begging their food from door to door and spending many hours in unbroken spiritual culture.

At the end of his wandering life, Swami Brahmananda returned to the monastery which was removed to a new place near Calcutta, and continued his spiritual practices with unabated vigour. As its result he came to be charged with a wonderful charm and power. His serene countenance, indrawn look, exalted mood, and nobility of character spoke of the depth of his soul. His heart overflowed with unbounded love and sympathy for all. The 'spiritual son' of Sri Ramakrishna was fast becoming a fountain head of inspiration, a powerful instrument for the realization of the great Mission of his Divine Master and the purpose for which they were born.

THE FOUNDING OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

In the course of his wanderings, the Swami's greatest brother-disciple, Swami Vivekananda, sailed for America and represented Hinduism and its spiritual ideals and culture at the World's Parliament of Religions held in 1893 at Chicago in the United States of America. From that distant land, the Swami used to urge his fellow-disciples to organize themselves and carry on different forms of service for the welfare of others. One by one most of them returned to the monastery from the life of seclusion and wandering. And from now began the life of spiritual ministration and service which along with spiritual striving have become so characteristic of the members of the Ramakrishna Order.

After his triumphal return from the West in 1897, Swami Vivekananda organized the Movement known as the Ramakrishna Mission and made Swami Brahmananda the President of the Calcutta Centre.

Swami Brahmananda stood by his chief and took up his duties with unfailing devotion and enthusiasm. Referring to these days Swami Brahmananda used to say: 'We led a wandering life for five or six years and then set ourselves to work. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) called me aside one day and said: "There is nothing in a wandering life. Work for the sake of the Lord." We did various kinds of work, but I do not think it did us any harm. Rather, it did us great good. But we had strong faith in Swamiji's words.' (*Spiritual Teachings*, p. 25).

HEAD OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

Early in 1898 Swami Vivekananda acquired the permanent home of the Order at Belur on the banks of the Ganges opposite Calcutta, and made it the headquarters of the movement bearing the name of his Master. Swami Brahmananda became the first abbot of the monastery, an office he held till his passing away in 1922.

Heavy was the burden that fell on the shoulders of the Swami after the passing away of his great Chief, Swami Vivekananda, in 1902. He had to work hard for organizing the monastery and its internal and public activities with the invaluable help, particularly of his brother-disciple Swami Saradananda who with remarkable ability performed the duties of the Secretary of the Mission till his demise in 1927. With the vision of a seer that he was, Swami Brahmananda knew that the best way to intensify the life of service was to stimulate the inner life of the workers and develop in them a truly selfless attitude towards work, through steady spiritual practice.

In 1903 he retired from active life for some months, devoted himself exclusively to intense spiritual disciplines, and returned to the monastery with increased illumination and power.

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHER

The Swami exercised the greatest discrimination in imparting spiritual teachings. As a rule, he avoided the lazy and the inquisitive who wish to attain spiritual experience without striving for it. 'What is the use' he said 'of tiring myself for nothing in speaking of spiritual practice to people who won't follow them? I

speak of higher matters only to a very few, who I think would take my word and act up to it.' He was ever ready to help the struggling soul and the sincere seeker after Truth and undergo all forms of troubles for their sake, as many of us know from what we experienced in our own lives as well as saw in those of others.

He had, however, no consciousness of the teacher. 'At times' he told a disciple 'the mind is in such a state that I feel I could entreat you all one by one, even touching your feet, saying, "Do this, my son, do this. I implore you." But again I think, who am I to instruct you in all this? The Lord is there: and as He makes us do, so it is done . . . Why should people take my words even though they ask me. But then you know, my boy, when inspiration comes from within, then people do take them and follow them. Strive on, my son, strive on and on.' (*Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 191 & 192).

During the long period of his ministration as the guiding spirit of the Movement, Swami Brahmananda was ever alive to the all-round welfare of his disciples and followers and to the necessity of maintaining the spiritual fire in the servants of God and humanity.

'If you desire to do work in the right spirit' says he 'you must hold these two great principles in view. In the first place, you must possess a profound regard for the work undertaken, and secondly you must be quite indifferent to the fruits thereof. Then alone can you do work in the proper way. This is called the secret of Karma Yoga. And you can avert all disinclination for work if you only consider it as belonging

to God. It is when you forget this secret that you become disturbed in mind; with a disturbed mind, you will not succeed either in advancing spiritually or in doing secular work.' (*Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 166 & 167).

He says again: 'A Karma Yogi must welcome any work that may fall to his share and gradually adjust himself to all requirements. Simply carrying on some work is not sufficient; it must be done disinterestedly—in the holy name of the Lord. A Karma Yogi must keep three-fourths of his mind in God and with the remaining one-fourth he should do whatever he has to do. Follow this rule, then alone can you do your work in the proper manner; your mind too will become expanded and you will feel great joy in you Never forget God.'

To maintain this attitude, you must stick to your spiritual practice by all means.' (*Spiritual Teachings*, p. 168).

The Swami had a very strong constitution. During the early years of his life he practised great austerities along with deep meditation and other spiritual disciplines, keeping awake long hours at night and having wonderful spiritual visions and realizations. Owing to a severe attack of typhoid in 1905, his health was greatly impaired. He partly got over the effects of his illness, but had to give from now some special consideration to his impaired health. However, if the body became delicate, the Spirit in him shone with greater radiance than ever. He came to possess extraordinary spiritual powers and became a veritable awakener of the souls turning to him for light and guidance.

HIS IDEAL OF AN ALL-ROUND GROWTH

As the activities of the Movement spread far and wide and new centres came to be established, the Swami had to move from one centre to another and to give a fresh impulse to the work and the workers.

Being always in tune with the Infinite and feeling himself to be a special instrument for the manifestation of Divine Will and Glory, he could create a wonderfully vibrant and elevating atmosphere wherever he went and bring a new inspiration and illumination to all spiritual souls who came in contact with him. At every place he visited he held the ideal of building up one's character above everything else before the members of the Order and lay devotees alike.

'I do not know' he used to say 'how far it is possible to serve others and the country before one's character is well formed. My belief is that the man who cannot solve his own problem will not be able to be of much use to others.'

The Swami always placed before his followers the ideal of an all-round growth, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. He himself used to take regular physical exercise and also urged others to do so. He also encouraged them to develop their intellect through systematic studies which increase their power of understanding and kept them away from 'idle gossip' and other harmful habits.

He was pre-eminently a spiritual teacher and his instructions differed with individuals. To one becoming engrossed in work, he spoke of one-pointed spiritual practice for some

time; to another who needed a life of balance, he said, 'Fix your mind firmly on God and perform your worldly duties.' To a third, who wanted to avoid the path of active service and lead a more or less aimless wandering life, he advised, 'Do not lead an easy-going life any more. If you do, you will not be able to practise spiritual exercises properly. Any work that you take up, do with your whole heart. This is the secret of work.'

With his deep insight into human nature, he always recognized the value and necessity of passing through the discipline of work which he wanted to be combined with spiritual practice. And so his general advice to the workers of the Order was: 'Work and worship must go hand in hand. As the *Gita* says, "Without performing work, none can reach worklessness." One can attain knowledge merely through the discipline of work . . . Instead of working for yourself, work for the sake of the Lord . . . If you can work with this idea, your work will not bind you. On the other hand, it will improve you in every way.'

The mind gets good training if one takes up some regular work at the beginning of the spiritual life. Then the trained mind can be applied to meditation and other spiritual practices.' (*Spiritual Teachings*, pp. 21, 22 & 26).

A VERSATILE SPIRITUAL GENIUS

In Swami Brahmananda one could see an extraordinarily balanced personality in whom the highest knowledge, deepest devotion, absolutely selfless spirit of service, and intensest concentration were wonderfully blend-

ed. He possessed great psychic powers which he rarely used except for the good of others. Those who knew him intimately marvelled to witness his highly developed esthetic taste, his remarkable love of music, his great interest in gardening, his loving care of animals, his keen knowledge of law, finance, and engineering, his extreme strictness in the management of public funds, his unique resourcefulness and practicality, his uncommon commonsense, all of which were the different manifestations of his versatile genius.

He was no scholar in the ordinary sense of the term; but he was endowed with a natural and unfailing intuition that brought him directly in touch with the very nature of things and revealed their secrets to a mind always open to truth, wherever it may be found.

Sri Ramakrishna spoke of his 'spiritual son' as one possessing the genius of a real king. The Swami's extraordinary spiritual attainments were combined with the royal dignity and the naturalness of a child. The impersonal and self-forgetful nature of his unique personality cast an indescribable spell and drew the admiration and veneration of all—his brother-disciples and followers, devotees and strangers, alike.

THE ILLUMINATOR OF SOULS

The Swami's ever-free Spirit manifested Its transcendental consciousness as much through wit and humour in which he indulged with the light-heartedness of a child approachable by all, as through the mystical gravity and serenity of his indrawn mood, which even his brother-disciples did not dare to disturb.

Those of who had the rare privilege of sitting at his feet saw with a sense of astonishment how he taught and guided others without making them feel the weight of his personality.

He was averse to giving formal talks on spiritual matters and never delivered a lecture in public except once when he spoke on matters spiritual. He then did so in a natural and inspired mood and brought a new light to those who listened to him. Through kind and sweet persuasion, or loving but strong admonition, or even through apparently lighthearted jokes and funs he usually gave the most serious of instructions.

There were occasions when by his magnetic touch the Swami could throw a fortunate soul into a high spiritual mood in which the aspirant got a glimpse of the Goal he had to strive for and attain. And even when such a phenomenon did not take place, one could often see how the Swami quickened the spirit of the spiritual seekers, brought fresh holiness and strength to the struggling soul, gave comfort and consolation to the weary and distressed, and transformed the lives of the perverted and the fallen.

Whoever came within the influence of the charmed circle, which the Swami created around himself, and got a touch of the infinite love that spontaneously flowed from his mighty heart, got also a God-ward turn and a taste of Divine Peace and Blessedness. This is what many of us experienced and verified time and again.

Swami Brahmananda was one of those rare souls who manifest from time to time,—the Illuminating Power of the Divine, the real Guru, the Enlightener, who, dwelling in every heart, brings spiritual awakening to mankind groping in the darkness of ignorance but yearning for the Light of Knowledge Divine.

‘I bow to the true Guru Who is the embodiment of the Bliss of Brahman, the Absolute, the giver of the greatest beatitude, the personification of the Highest Knowledge; Who is beyond the pairs of opposites and is untouched by evil, like the sky; the One without a second, the Eternal, the Pure, the Immovable, the Witness of all mental modifications, abiding ever beyond all thoughts and attributes.’

It is a good tongue that says no ill.

It is safer to hear and take counsel than to give it.

It is not how long but how well we live.

Love is the touch-stone of virtue.

Nature teaches us to love our friends but religion our enemies.

Precepts may lead but examples draw.

A candle lights others and consumes itself.

A crooked stick will have a crooked shadow.

THE VEDANTIC THOUGHT OF VIJNANABHIKSHU

By Dr. P. T. Raju, M.A., Ph.D., Sastri,
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VIJNANABHIKSHU, the well-known commentator on the *Sankhyapravachanasutras* wrote a commentary on the *Brahmasutras* also. As a Vedantin he could not hold strictly to the pure dualism of Purusha and Prakriti and the pluralism of the Purushas as held by the Sankhya. For the Upanishads declare that all is one and that there is no difference between the Brahman and the world. Vijnanabhiikshu, therefore, treats the Purushas and the Prakriti as the Sakti of Isvara, and says that between Sakti and the possessor of Sakti there is no difference.¹ Thus Isvara is taken as one and the Upanishadic statements in favour of Advaita are reconciled. Vijnanabhiikshu rejects the Nyaya theory of absolute difference between Isvara and the Jivas.² This does not mean that Isvara and the Jivas are absolutely one, or that there is no difference between one Purusha and another. In fact for Vijnanabhiikshu difference is more fundamental and identity has to be explained as that which exists between father and son.³ The examples of air and its parts and fire and its sparks are also given.⁴ There is mutual negation, or difference⁵ between the world and the Brahman, and yet the two are inseparable. That is, in spite of separability there

is inseparability.⁶ The Absolute of Vijnanabhiikshu would somewhat be like that of McTaggart. The Jivas are said to be parts (*amsah*) of the Brahman, but to be a part means to be inseparable while being of the same nature⁷ as that of the whole.

True to his Sankhya, Vijnanabhiikshu accepts *satkaryavada* or the theory that the effect exists in the cause. In fact the Prakriti of the Sankhya has been bodily grafted on to this Vedantic system, that the difference between the two being that the Sankhya has no place for Isvara. Vijnanabhiikshu writes that in the Sankhya for which both the Purusha and Prakriti are independent entities the contact between the two is effected by the Purusha who is the first Jiva. This is no final solution, for the question would be put: How could the first Jiva himself have come into contact with Prakriti? But according to this Vedantic system, Isvara does the work of the first Jiva; it is possible for Isvara to do it because both the Purushas and Prakriti together constitute his Sakti and are therefore dependent on Him.⁸

Though Vijnanabhiikshu advocates *satkaryavada* yet curiously enough he maintains that the world is both being and non-being, *sat* and *asat*.⁹ But it is not explained clearly why the world is *asat* also.

The Brahman is not affected by the creation of the world because the

¹ *Brahmasutrabhashya*, p. 202. (Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series, Benares).

² *Ibid*, p. 60.

³ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 50.

⁵ *Op. Cit.*

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 61.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 51.

⁸ *Brahmasutrabhashyam*, p. 34.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 23 and 103.

world is due to the transformation of the Prakriti and not that of the Brahman. When the Upanishads declare that the world issues forth from the Brahman, they mean that the world issues from It with the help of the *upadhi* of Maya called Suddhasattva, when It has the whole of Prakriti and the Jivas absorbed into Itself (*antarlina*) and existing in an unmanifest state.¹⁰ So the Brahman is not the material cause (*upadana* or *samavayakarana*) of the world. But the peculiarity of Vijnanabhikshu's position is that for it the Brahman is not even the *nimittakarana* or efficient cause of the world. It is what is called the *adhishthana* or the *adharakarana*. *Adhishthana* or *adhabra* means support or locus. The Brahman is the support or locus of the world process. As such it is unaffected by the process. It is the pure witness or *Sakshi* of the drama of creation.¹¹ According to Vijnanabhikshu, there are four kinds of causes:¹² the material cause or *samavayakarana*, the *asamavayakarana* which may be translated as the relational cause as, for instance, the contact of two parts in producing a whole and also the activity of the parts in coming together to form the whole, the *nimittakarana* or the efficient cause, and the *adhishthanakarana* or the supporting cause.

Now, what is the nature of liberation? The real nature of the Purusha is pure consciousness. And as the support and witness of everything Isvara is the self (*atma*) of all the Purushas. When a Purusha realizes

this truth, he loses the sense of egoity: he feels that so long he has been thinking that he was the enjoyer, sufferer, etc., but in truth he was not so and that he was only the pure witness.

Vijnanabhikshu does not maintain that the Jiva thereby becomes absolutely identical with Isvara. He only becomes pure consciousness like Him. This is of course the Sankhya view: that the true nature of the Purusha is pure consciousness, that it is a pure unperturbed witness of Prakriti's dalliance, and that the Purushas form a plurality. And what has been said against the pluralism of Sankhya holds against the position of Vijnanabhikshu. For when the Purusha in the liberated state becomes pure consciousness devoid of all determinations, we have really no basis for differentiating between them. Moreover, Isvara is said to be a pure witness; and in the liberated state the Purusha enters Isvara and also becomes a pure witness. Vijnanabhikshu, tells us that Isvara is the *adharakarana* of the world by being a pure witness. But why not the Purusha who is also a pure witness? He answers that before creation the Purusha could not have been a pure *Sakshi*. But what about the liberated Purushas? The unliberated, we may accept, are not pure witnesses as they are still within the bonds of Prakriti. But the liberated must be treated as pure witnesses. If they are, then they too must be the *adharakarana*. But how many *adharakaranas* can there be? If the liberated Purusha too is an *adharakarana*, he must enjoy the same status as that of Isvara; that is, he must be the Isvara. There can really be no principle of distinc-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹ *Op. Cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

tion between the two; and absolute monism, somewhat like that of Sankara, would result. The way towards monism in Vijnanabhikshu's position is so clear that in spite of his attempts to remain a dualist, thought, when once put in the track cut by him, cannot stop short of absolute monism. Like Ramanuja Vijnanabhikshu wants to give more importance to difference than to identity. But coming from the Sankhya, Vijnanabhikshu unlike Ramanuja treats Isvara and the Purushas as pure witnesses. And this idea very easily lends itself to a

critical development of monism. So in spite of Vijnanabhikshu's dualism which his position is very often interpreted to be, the monistic trend of his system is quite apparent. The two points which have monistic value are his treating the Prakriti and Purushas as the Sakti of the Brahman and the Purushas as pure witnesses like Isvara into Whom they enter (*antarlina*) when liberated. It is Vijnanabhikshu's association with the Sankhya that has created in the minds of many the impression that he is an out and out dualist and pluralist.

BUDDHI-YOGA

(THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL AS REVEALED IN THE *GITA*)

By Magadala Ramachandra

GOD A PRINCIPLE

THE Teacher of the *Bhagavadgita* is God Himself. In Buddhi-yoga we should perceive Him not as a personality but as a principle. This will greatly assist our study of the science of the Soul as taught in the *Gita*. In our study the human personality of Sri Krishna who taught the *Gita* we should consider only the universal Creative Principle which expressed itself through that personality. An ideological treatment would not however detract the importance of the personality of Sri Krishna which has sustained the Sanatana Dharma through the ages. Our religion has ever rested on impersonal revelations more than on personal ones. It has already secured all the sustenance it could by cherishing

the personality of Sri Krishna, and to those who seek for more of it He is ever at hand.

THE MAHABHARATA AND THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF CREATION

The author of the *Gita* reveals Himself in it as the Creator of the worlds. The evidence of the *Mahabharata* regarding the author of the *Gita* being also the Supreme Soul and the Creator of the universe is too important to be disregarded. The dynastic history of the Kauravas and the Pandavas is the main subject-matter of the *Mahabharata*. The Kauravas figure in it to bring into relief the virtuous life of the Pandavas. Similarly the Pandavas are there to add lustre to the greatness of Sri Krishna and to make it known to the world. The vast extent of the

Mahabharata, its complexities, the delineations of its great characters, its episodes, small or great, moving us to pity or rage—all these are introduced into it on purpose to declare and present to the world Sri Krishna as the Supreme Soul, as the highest among gods and as the power that moves the entire world. Bhagavan Vyasa, the author of *Mahabharata*, and the other great personalities of the time emphatically proclaimed that they knew not the limit of Sri Krishna's greatness, that in fact no one was capable of entirely comprehending it. The faith was deep sunk in the hearts of the people of Bharatavarsha of those times that the Supreme Soul who is the Overlord of the worlds had assumed human form and was in their midst as Sri Krishna to interest Himself in their weal and woe and to see to the fruition of the divine destiny of their lives.

It would not do for us to judge this ardent faith of theirs from our present-day standards. It would not do to disregard their puissant faith in the manifestation of the Lord of the universe when assessing the worth of their emotions and actions. It is necessary to appreciate the depth and reality of this faith in order to judge the worth of the spiritual, religious, moral, and social greatness attained by the people of Bharatavarsha of those times. In trying to fathom the meaning of the teachings of such a unique personality it is better indeed to enter into the spirit of His utterances.

IS THE GITA A SECOND-HAND PURVEYOR?

We have closely examined the question of *Gita*'s indebtedness to anterior works. The contention is

superficial as it is based on some resemblance in words and phrases only. The system of thought propounded is not to be met with as it is in any of the previous works. It is very important to note that in most cases words which are used by other schools have been used in the *Gita* to inculcate new ideas, e.g., words and phrases adopted in the *Gita* from the Upanishads are intended to support tenets peculiar to the former. Buddhi-yoga, Karma-yoga, Brahma-yoga are principles germane to the *Gita* philosophy, as also the ideas of Bhakti, Purushottama, Purushatraya, Adhyatma, Vyavasaya, Vyabhichara, Daivasura-sampat, etc. Though the *Gita* and the Upanishads are works pertaining to the same subject, their treatments run on parallel lines. This being so, it is not proper to infer the derivative character of the *Gita*. It is also clear that when adopting phrases or verses from other works, the *Gita* very significantly introduces a variation in them which is apparently unimportant but really of great consequence. Even from these variations its new outlook and the supreme sublimity of its philosophy become markedly apparent. (Cf. VIII: 5-6, III: 42, & XV: 6.)

TO UNDERSTAND THE GITA BE IN TUNE WITH IT

Sri Krishna has opened His heart and has presented His plenary knowledge to us unreservedly in the Eighteen Chapters of the *Gita*. That Sri Krishna's utterances in the *Gita* were designed by Him to be enigmatic seems impossible. Arjuna's powers of understanding were normal. This is self-evident from the questions he

put to Sri Krishna. The *Gita* was easily and fully grasped by him. Why should it not become equally clear to us? If we could study the *Gita* with a love for Sri Krishna as disinterested and faithful as that of Arjuna and attempt to discern the intricacies of the teaching, it will indeed be as clear to us as it was to Arjuna. Unless we thus come to be in tune with Sri Krishna it will not be possible for us to grasp the secret of the *Gita*. It will not serve our purpose if we merely understand the human personality of Sri Krishna. It is not enough to conceive Him in the four-armed divine form. To understand Him 'in principle' (Tattvatah) is to understand Him rightly (XVIII: 55). He taught the *Bhagavadgita* so that the people may so understand Him 'in principle'; not certainly to rouse Arjuna to war when a crisis seemed to overtake him. Arjuna's doubts and despondency vanished because he grasped Sri Krishna 'in principle'—not because of Sri Krishna's eloquent oratory (X: 12-18). Those who would understand the *Gita* in its real significance must similarly understand its author, Sri Krishna, 'in principle'. To know a personality 'in principle' is to know its inward nature, its powers and capacities (IV: 9). We shall now therefore proceed to study what Sri Krishna tells us in the *Gita* about His own nature, powers, and capacities.

INTUITION IS THE WAY TO KNOW
THE TRUTH

The *Gita* stimulates the power of intuition in man for a fruitful enquiry. The *Gita* does not say that this power

of intuition is a special attribute of only Mahatmas. Neither is it the power of realization by an inner sense said to be found in Vibhutis or master-mystics. This intuition is an attribute of the common human nature found more or less latent in men but easily regained by them by means of conscious effort. The *Gita* has also pointed out the straight and easy way to attain it. In the human being it is the function of the intellect to take cognisance of the impulses transmitted to it from the Soul. It is this power inherent in the intellect which is called intuition. It is well-nigh lost beyond trace in the ordinary man, but is easily possible for him to recover it. The capacity for righteous faith in man, however, feeble, is the seed from which intuitional power develops. If this faith is well nurtured it grows and ripens in him, and is then seen as Bhakti, or Vijnana, or Yoga in its later stages. By its fervid appeal to the intuitional faith in man, the *Gita* not only resolves all his doubts 'without a residue' about the creation (VII: 2), but also brings all its explanations within the grasp of the ordinary reasoning intellect. But in this process the *Gita* descends from the top to the base. The creation is not without its author. He is neither the sentient nor the insentient. He is beyond both. He is not one incapable of a will. This creation itself is a ripple of His absolute will (Maya), which scintillates in His mind. He is ever expressed in the form of universal projection. He is the one who takes birth in definite forms from age to age in this, His own creation. He is the Purusha (the enjoyer)—the

Purushottama. He is Sri Krishna in human form who taught the *Gita* to Arjuna!

THE GITA SPEAKS OF INTUITION
AS 'SRADDHA'

That a person acclaims or denies Sri Krishna is all to the *Gita* due entirely to the tendency (Prakriti) inborn in him (III: 31-32). Those without intuition, who in consequence do not accept Him as the Supreme, the *Gita* has no advice to offer, and this for reasons mentioned in it. But once anyone accepts Sri Krishna as the author of Creation, it is unfair to approach His explanations of the actual manner and method of creation with disbelief. He has stated these in the *Gita* so as to satisfy our intellect also. But they cannot be understood by mere logic. The process of intellectual reasoning, according to the *Gita*, is complete only when aided by intuition. The *Gita* therefore appeals to both Sraddha and Buddhi. This being so, if we eschew intuition altogether and merely rely on logic, the riddle of the universe will for ever remain unsolved. This will harm the individual and not certainly the *Gita* or Sri Krishna. The Supreme Lord of creation who is a friend to all is sore when this happens, because sin grows apace where ignorance rules. And He descends into birth that He may succour them. In one of such births—as the Lord Sri Krishna—He has through Arjuna explained to mankind clearly and completely the whole truth about His manner and method of creation. Blessed are they that properly and correctly grasp the teaching like Arjuna.

ATMA AND PURUSHA

The difficulty of interpreting technical terms, and in some cases even verses, in the *Gita* has also to be considered. We have sought no other authority but the *Gita* itself for our interpretations. The *Gita* bristles with its own meanings and interpretations. If we study it with the aid of these, we think, the meaning everywhere becomes clear and suggestive of its subtle and sublime philosophy. Let us consider the distinction which the *Gita* makes in the meaning of the words Atman and Purusha, for example. In the *Gita* the term Purusha does not always denote the sense conveyed by the term Atman. There is a subtle and important difference in its use of these two words. The Atman is the original principle. This original principle desires happiness by its own inherent capacity. The original principle is denoted by the term Atman—Soul—until this desire for happiness remains quiescent in it. As soon as it becomes expressed the Soul is called a Purusha. As this Purusha capacity when expressed still reposes in the original Soul nature, though over-shadowing it, the Purusha can be still spoken of as the Soul. But the soul principle in which the desire for happiness, which is an attribute of the Purusha nature, is not expressed is never spoken of as Purusha in the *Gita*. The *Gita* accepts that the Soul nature is primarily actionless, free from Gunas, unexpressed, unborn, unthinkable. But the moment this primary and absolute Soul—of its own free and absolute will, 'Maya'—expresses the Purusha capacity within itself, the *Gita* propounds that it becomes

active, invested with Gunas, expensible, prone to births, conceivable. The architect of this creation is not the Soul incapable of action but the active Purusha—the Purushottama. To know Him as the Purushottama—the Supreme Enjoyer—is to understand everything about the birth of this creation (XV: 19). Thus the difference in significance between the terms Atman and Purusha postulated by the *Gita* is of considerable importance.

OUTLINE OF THE GITA PHILOSOPHY

Sri Krishna is the supremest Soul principle (X: 20). He transforms Himself into the Purushottama—the Supreme Enjoyer—by His own absolute desire—Maya—and by His inherent capacity to do so. That is to say by means of His inherent capacity. He wills and sets out to realize a particular happiness in a particular manner. Simultaneously with His transformation into the Supreme Purusha the principle of Karma in creation is set in motion. For this principle of Karma is nothing but the will to attain happiness and the volitional capacity to realize it (VIII: 3). The will to derive happiness belongs to the Purusha nature and the capacity to produce and realize such happiness constitutes the Prakriti (XIII: 20). Both these expressions of the principle of Karma have their source in the Supreme Purusha in their very beginning. On becoming the Supreme Purusha the happiness which He wills for Himself is, to be the Supreme Overlord (IX: 24, V: 29).

He is the Soul principle—the One without a second. He transforms Himself into the Supreme Purusha and

yet remains the One without a second. How can He become the Supreme Overlord? Where are His subjects of whom He can claim to be the Overlord? It is in the very nature of the invariable Karmic principle that as soon as the desire for happiness awakens in the Purusha, the allied Prakritic half simultaneously acts to realize it. The Supreme Purusha accordingly so formulates His Prakritic capacity that it provides the happiness He has willed to achieve (VII: 4-5, IX: 7-8, and XIV: 3-4). A particle of Himself is imbued with the capacity to achieve the result He desires and is appointed to produce it (X: 42). This particle of the Supreme imbued with full Prakritic competence to carry out His will is called the Brahma (III: 15).

Though thus overstressed with the Prakritic tendency we have to remember that this particle of the Supreme partakes of His original Purusha nature also. Bound as it is to fulfil the purpose of the Supreme, the Purusha nature of this particle is not independent. It has to entirely subserve and fulfil the purpose of the Supreme. Because its existence is thus qualified and conditioned for the Divine purpose its nature is described as Sat. Because he is a Purusha; it goes without saying that he is imbued with the desire for happiness. But he will not seek for this happiness except in the discharge of the particular function for which he was brought into being. Therefore the happiness which he thus derives in fulfilling that specific function is called Ananda. He is ever pointedly intent on performing Yajna for the Supreme and he derives his

happiness from this single purpose. His self-consciousness, which is thus singly devoted, is therefore known as Chit. This Chit nature of the Brahma is what is termed in the *Gita*—Adhyatma (VIII: 3), Atmic intentness on the Supreme. Just as the Purushottama is so signified on account of His utmost Supreme Purusha nature, the Brahma is called the Kutastha Purusha by reason of his being the supreme among Purushas with the Adhyatmic trend. In this lies the difference between the Brahma and the Purushottama in the *Gita*.

How can the desire of the Supreme for overlordship be satisfied with creating Brahma alone? A macrocosmic creation for the purpose of realizing His overlordship is His objective. Aphorisms may tell us to be satisfied with an only offspring well blessed and well endowed. But the Brahma alone though faultless and faithful cannot satisfy the hunger of the Supreme for projection. Brahma must bring forth beings in further involution (III: 20). Worlds and the universal endeavour such as we see around us must issue forth in him (XIV: 3-4). Therefore the Brahma is appointed to bring into being the creation and sustain it in action as we see it. That is his sole duty to the Supreme. It is not enough for him to satisfy the Supreme by his own steadfast loyalty and unfailing attention. He should undertake the projection of the worlds in a spirit of dedication (Yajna) to the Supreme and offer it to Him (III: 15).

How does the Brahma project the worlds out of himself? The Brahma has derived from the Supreme a

Prakritic nature impregnated with the principle of Karma in the same way that he derived his Purusha nature. Every soul in creation, howsoever small or great, must be imbued with the Prakritic and Purusha natures. For these are ever united with one another and can never be found apart. The Brahman produced this creation out of himself by contriving a further involution in his Prakritic nature.

Though the Prakritic nature abides in both the Brahma and the Supreme, its powers of involution have been partially and not fully expressed in them. Its expression in involution becomes complete in the course of creation which proceeds from the Brahma. Prakriti consists of the following elemental capacities or powers: Buddhi, Ego, and the Mind, which includes the five senses, as well as the five elemental principles which include the five sense objects. All these together are known as the eight-fold Prakriti in the *Gita* (VII: 4). Besides these eight elements, the three Gunas or qualities, *viz.*, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas (XIV: 5) are inherent in Prakriti. The play of these three Gunas and eight capacities is called Samshti or Samsara of Prakriti—the path of the progress of cosmic evolution.

Though for the purpose of investigation we cognize and consider the Purusha and the Prakriti as different entities, without the Purusha the Prakriti can neither exist nor act. In the *Gita* three such Purushas who set the Prakriti to work have been mentioned, and these have been classed into two categories, *viz.*, the Kshara and the Akshara. The Supreme is known as Akshara; so is the

Brahman who is the Kutastha Purusha. The Akshara nature of both these is not the same—a difference in degree exists in it. The Supreme is known as the Uttama or the most supreme Akshara. The Brahma though supreme (VIII: 3) is still the intermediate Akshara (XV: 18). All Purushas have been ordained for a particular Bhava or attitude. The Bhava of the Supreme towards creation is known in the *Gita* as the Yoga Bhava (X: 7). Though He is above creation, He regards it with a sense of intense personal interest—He feels it is His own. He will never be remiss to this interest in creation and because of this infallibility in His attitude He is known as the Akshara. The ordained Bhava (attitude) of the second Purusha *viz.*, Brahma is spoken of in the *Gita* as Adhyatma (VIII: 3). Not only in his activities but in his very being, as the Brahma is intent on the Supreme, his Bhava—regard for the Supreme—is spoken of as Adhyatma in the *Gita*. He is never remiss to this his ordained attitude and is therefore known as the Akshara. Thus both the Supreme and the Brahma are Akshara, that is to say, entities that are infallible in their ordained attitudes. But the third Purusha who stands in a different category from these two, is called in the *Gita* as Kshara. Who could this be? How does he come to be Kshara—fallible? We shall presently consider these questions.

It is hardly necessary to remark that the submission, the intentness, the dutiful regard—Adhyatma—and the spirit of sacrifice—Tapa—which the Brahma yields to the Supreme are absolutely faultless. There is the

utmost plenitude of devotion in them. Yet they are undoubtedly devoid of action or activity. The Adhyatma-bhava which the Supreme desires from His creation is not certainly meant to be devoid of Karma. His motive in creation is to derive through Brahma a harvest of activity and action dedicated to Himself in a spirit of Adhyatma—Yajna. To this end then the Brahma has to proceed with the course of further involution from himself so that he may provide the Supreme with the multitude of subjects in creation to fulfil His overlordship and through them to produce the harvest of Yoga (devotion) and Yajna (dedicated activity) and Tapa (sacrifice) for which He is eager. The Purusha (soul) whom the Brahma projects out of himself to achieve this end is the one who is called the Kshara.

The Supreme created the Brahma out of a particle of Himself. Similarly the Brahma utilizes a particle of his being to put forth this creation. The creation he is to bring into being must subserve the purpose of the Supreme, which is to derive Yajna and Tapa through an endless process of cosmic activity. A particle of himself which stands in utter regard of the Supreme in Sattvic beatitude can never achieve this result. Its balance must be disturbed. This is not however possible by a change in his Purusha nature which is infallibly Adhyatmic—devoted to the Supreme. The Brahma has therefore to achieve this by the Prakritic nature of his particle. To this end the Brahma preferentially utilizes the Rajoguna among the Gunas and the Ego principle among the internal instru-

ments, both eminently suitable for producing Yajna through activity, and sets a particle of his own Purusha nature to rule over the play of these conjointly with the other remaining principles of Prakriti. This Purusha particle thus enmeshed in Ahankara (ego-sense) expresses itself as the multitude of Jivas (souls) in creation and overwhelmed by an urge to Rajasic activity becomes the constituent means for cosmic manifestation. The Sat-nature of the Brahma expresses itself in him as Buddhi (intellect) and his Ananda nature as Manas (mind). In further involution, from Manas issue forth the five senses of perception and activity, and the expression of Prakritic involution becomes complete in him. Thus involved in the play of Prakritic activity due to a divine dispensation—Maya (VII: 14)—this Purusha entity is drawn by the force of its Adhyatmic-nature in one direction and at the same time powerfully attracted by the Prakritic influence of the Antahkaranas in the opposite direction. The *Gita* tirelessly affirms in all solemnity that the Jiva Purushas (souls) are dependent and helpless; that they are subjected to the Prakritic play; that Jnana (knowledge) is overlaid with Ajnana (ignorance) in them; that they are the sport of a divine dispensation (yadrichchha). We hope that the explanations given above will make these assertions of the *Gita* easily intelligible. If in the struggle entailed in him by these opposing influences the Jiva Purusha (soul) fails to stand firm and persevere in preserving his Adhyatmic consciousness he is enveloped in the darkness of the Prakritic play in him

and immersed in the sorrows which follow. He is called a Kshara Purusha because of this fallibility in him.

The Jiva need hardly bemoan this inferior status or despair of himself on that account. It is true he is not born in the Akshara (infallible) status like the Supreme and the Brahma. Yet is he privileged to secure that very Akshara status in no time by a supreme effort of his will. The *Gita* proclaims this freedom for him (IX: 31 & VI: 8). It assures him that the effort required of him to this end is easy and no burden to him; that such effort (Jnana) is innate in his very constitution (IX: 2). He can easily attain the Brahmisthiti (status in Brahma) by such effort. Even when wallowing in Prakritic ignorance he is in the Brahma. For everything that exists as a part of or particle in creation is in the Brahma and cannot possibly remain outside of him. It is harmful to the Jiva (soul) to remain in the Brahma in a state of Ayoga (apostasy), sense-engrossed. The proper condition for man in the Brahma is to fully realize his intrinsic Atmic (soul) nature—to be Atmavan (possessed of soul), to stand in a state of Adhyatma (devotion to the Supreme), and to find his equilibrium in Nitya-sattva (II: 45). When he attains this condition in the Brahma no sin can touch him. Howsoever he may act, he remains faultless; like the Brahma and the Supreme he achieves endless bliss by dint of Adhyatma and becomes eternally free.

It is true that a detailed description of the process by which the Jivabhuta Purusha—Kshara (fallible soul)—comes to be, exactly as

we have given above, is not met with in the *Gita*. Principles only are mentioned in it. Explanations are very concise. Yet if these principles are clearly grasped our presentation of them will, we think, be found quite justified. It is necessary here to trace the relation between spirit and matter, the witness and the witnessed in creation in the light of the processes we have detailed above as the *Gita* purports to explain them. Because the theories about creation as we have interpreted them here from the *Gita* stand or fall by the rational explanation they convey regarding these relations. It can be easily gleaned from the *Gita* that all individual existence is a formulation of the Jivabhuta (Kshara) principle. Let us see how. The Prakritic principle of the soul has been stated to be eightfold and is ever united with the Purusha. Of these eight, the principle of Ahankara (Ego) is present everywhere in creation and is the sole cause of the omnipresent sense of individuality. Each of the remaining seven principles of Prakriti becoming adventitiously predominant in conjunction with the others in varying degrees, is forced by the three Gunas (qualities) into formulations. Thus emanate from the particular principle myriads of forms and qualities, though apparently different yet characteristic of the original principle. The principle of Buddhi, first of the series, in unison with the remaining six, expresses intellectual capacities in the being it formulates, mind the second principle jointly with the five elemental principles inferior to it and the principle of Buddhi superior to it begets individualities with accentuated

mental capacities. An avidity for sensual satisfaction which is born of the mind is characteristic of these individuals. Lower down in this scale occurs the province of elemental existences. Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth—the five elemental principles—each of these covertly imbued with the remaining seven principles, brings into being the material element which its name signifies. In this manner the Jivabhuta (soul) individualities which spring from and in Brahna are the constituents of all beings from the minutest iota of material existence to man, the intellectual individual. Our purpose in outlining these processes here is merely to indicate the most rational probabilities. It is obviously impossible in this way to trace the beings and becomings of individualities in their varied course of evolution. Nor is it necessary to do so. If we grasp the broad outlines of the processes, it should not be difficult to surmise with fair satisfaction the mode of progress undergone in each case. To know every case in detail from beginning to end is possible for the Supreme alone who for His own purpose created the worlds and who is present in the heart of every being as Kshetrajna (the Overlord) and Adhiyajna (the one to be worshipped). This can never be possible for others (IV: 5, VII: 26).

We have yet to discuss one other question, *i.e.*, the question what becomes of the soul—the individual soul—after death? The *Gita* admits life after death for the individual not so much in a place of abode as in a state of happiness or sorrow. Be that as it may, the Jiva (soul) cannot obviously go beyond the

limits of this creation and beyond the Brahma who is himself ever wholly involved in it. The *Gita* exhausts all that it has to say about the Jiva's (soul's) life in the hereafter in one specific statement. To those who have attained Brahmic status (perfection) or Buddhi-yoga there is no bondage of Karma and consequent experiences either good or bad in their life after death (XVIII: 12). The *Gita* does not therefore discuss details of it at all in their case; it suggests that they are free from all care and are very happy in the hereafter even as they are here. To those who are Ayukta—devoid of Buddhi-yoga—who do not give up the fruit of their actions, nay, who engage in action with attachment to its fruit, the life after death is, the *Gita* opines, meant to reap the fruit of the good or bad actions they have conserved in life. The conduct prescribed in the *Adhyatma Sastra* (Spiritual Science) of the *Gita* for the attainment of Sreya (Spiritual well-being) in the hereafter is briefly stated. There are no deeds of retribution, no ostentatious ceremonies, no castles of imagination prescribed in it. To abjure Kama, Krodha, and Lobha—desire, anger, and lust—the three gateways to hell, to become fearless, and with all the might of one's spiritual, material, mental, and sensual natures to put faith in the Supreme—or even without such faith—to perform Sattvic Niyatakarmas—Yajna, Dana, and Tapas. This is the *Gita* way. We do not know of another scripture which lays down a code of practical spiritual conduct at once so simple and ideal yet so profoundly and thoroughly based on

sublime philosophical tenets, yet so effective.

THE GITA AND BHAKTI

Bhakti is the secret taught in the *Gita*. According to the *Gita* man is to attune his Buddhi to no other object but the Supreme. The Bhakti taught in the *Gita* is not irrational belief. A perfect system of intelligible philosophy underlies the path of devotion propounded in the *Gita*. In the *Gita*, Jnana (knowledge) and Karma (action) are neither equals nor rivals of Bhakti. Bhakti is the one duty, the one ideal, the highest Yoga, and the Supreme Dharma, while Jnana and Karma are only subservient to it. The author of the *Gitarahasya* held that Jnanayoga accompanied by Bhakti and predominated by Karma is the main teaching of the *Gita*. It would be truer to say that Bhakti-yoga with Karma as a predominant element and Jnana as an accompaniment is the *Gita* ideal. In the view of the *Gita* Bhakti has greater power and potentiality for Mukti than Jnana. True knowledge about the Overlord of the worlds is absolutely essential for man. The Supreme described in the *Gita* is the creator and Overlord of the worlds. Bhakti for Him is real Bhakti. Bhakti given to gods other than this Supreme, the *Gita* characterizes as irregular (Avidhipurvaka). The straight way to acquire Bhakti for Him is to know Him and realize Him as He is, viz., the Creator of the worlds, their Overlord and their enjoyer (Bhoktri). From such Bhakti is born the spirit of sacrifice, from sacrifice peace, from peace happiness, from happiness the destruction of all sorrow. Bhakti for

the Supreme abides through all these stages of attainment and reaches out to the higher state of Brahmisthiti, Brahmanirvana, and unto eternity.

Though Bhakti is thus a very important principle in the *Gita*, it considers prevailing practices of Bhakti to be the early lessons in the school of Adhyatma. They are not its highest modes indicative of maturity. All Bhakti systems begin with the practice of Abhyasa of the rudiments; and through Jnana realized by that means arrive at Dhyana (XII: 12). Thus Dhyana (contemplation or concentration) is the farthest limit of achievement of these schools. All the forms of the nine-fold Bhakti are included in Dhyana. The *Gita* enjoins that genuine Bhakti must go far beyond this limit set by Dhyana. The *Gita* refuses to gauge the intensity of Bhakti by the measure of Dhyana displayed. Bhakti which has ripened so as to exceed the highest potentiality of Dhyana must, the *Gita* enjoins, show itself in the capacity for self-abnegation and for renunciation of the fruit of actions. This is the new outlook characteristic of the teaching of the *Gita* in regard to Bhakti. According to the school of the nine-fold Bhakti, there is neither this demand for the practice of refusal of fruit, nor this test; nor, again, the insistence on the Supreme as the Godhead. All these criteria distinguish the teaching of the *Gita* above the ordinary Bhakti. Even the highest climax of mere Dhyana, though united with Bhakti will not lead to peace. What the devotee must obtain from Dhyana, even at its highest, is the renunciation of the fruit of deeds. From such renunciation issues peace;

and without peace there is no redemption or Mukti. Therefore the devotee must turn to the renunciation of fruit at the earliest opportunity and to the best of his ability (XII: 12). Without this orientation towards renunciation Bhakti is still immature.

Renunciation of fruit as inculcated in the *Gita*, does not mean mere refusal of it. The *Gita* does not preach the blind formulac 'Not this for me' (Idam na mama). Tyaga—renunciation—means in the *Gita* not so much the refusal of it but its acceptance in a particular attitude. The Supreme who is the Overlord presides over all fruit of action; He ordains the fruit of actions to all men as He deems fit. Whether this fruit granted by Him is agreeable or disagreeable, to accept it for His sake, is the renunciation taught in the *Gita*. When the devotee acts in this spirit he is said to engage in action for the Supreme. In such a state it is true that the devotee is devoid of attachment to the fruit of his action. Yet the enthusiasm for the performance of action does not abate in him in the least. He is regardless of his own welfare. He bears with pleasure (V: 23) all impacts and contacts which bring either pleasure or sorrow. This begets in him perennial peace. And the result of such peace is everlasting happiness. The Bhakta's life is well spent if only he has lived in peace and joy in this way, and by the grace of God ultimately he merits redemption (Mukti).

Current notions of Bhakti are mostly based on aesthetic considerations. That from such Bhakti we experience a superior kind of joy is

true. But the joy born of peace realized through 'Atmabuddhi' (XVIII: 37) will be reached only through a stage of bitter self-restraint. In the joy we now realize from the ordinary practice of Bhakti there is not to be found, generally speaking, either this restraint or the bitter struggle which it entails. We experience therein the joy we aim at, from beginning to end. The joy sought for and immediately realized is the only result of practising such Bhakti. The *Gita* proclaims that unless the Bhakta (devotee) takes to the performance of Niyatakarmas—Yajna, Dana, and Tapa—and rises to the height of renunciation of their fruit he will not deserve the grace of the Supreme without which there can be no redemption.

MESSAGE OF THE GITA TO THE
PHILOMATHS

The main principles of the *Gita* are quite simple, and well co-ordinated. In the *Gita* the creator of the macrocosm is called the Supreme Enjoyer—Purushottama. This Supreme Being creates all beings in the universe for His own purpose. His purpose in doing this is to realize the prerogative of overlordship and to enjoy the harvest of Yajna and Tapa yielded by them (V: 29, IX: 24). To His creatures this purpose of the Supreme may appear unkind and harsh. But it is not so. In this universal concern He cares more for His creatures than for Himself. Like the mother's care for the child which is absolutely unselfish the affection of the Supreme for His creatures is unselfish too. Because of His unselfishness in the matter of creation and because of His extreme solicitude

for His creatures the *Gita* describes His purpose in creation as Pavitra and Divya (righteous and divine). The act of creation from beginning to end is characterized in the *Gita* as the immaculate course (Shuklagati) of the sport (Lila) of His divine absolute wish (Daivi-maya). From the original Atmic (Soul) principle the Supreme comes to be the creator of the worlds, their Overlord and presiding deity (X: 2). To desire overlordship and Yajna and to obtain these from His subjects is His divine will or Maya. As a means to realize this purpose He puts forth a particle out of Himself as the Brahma. The nature of this Brahma is described as Adhyatma (VIII: 3); that is to say, it is to be ever intent upon the Atma—the Supreme—and immersed in fulfilling His desire. The Brahma puts forth this creation out of himself for the sake of the Supreme and dedicates it to Him. This is his only function. Of this creation, beings and the principle of Karma to which they are subject are two important parts. The beings fulfil the desire of the Supreme for overlordship and the principle of Karma fulfils His desire to realize Yajna. The beings are denoted in the *Gita* by the term Bhutagrama. As man is endowed with the Buddhi (intellect) the responsibility of purposefully carrying forward the course of Shuklagati mainly devolves on him. The dual principles of Purusha and Prakriti are as well part of his nature as they are of everything else in creation. The avidity for happiness natural to man is due to the influence of this Purusha principle in it. Man secures the happiness he wills to achieve by the

capacity of his Prakritic nature for action.

He has been brought into being that he should abide in the Shukla path. The Sattvic Adhyatma nature of the Brahma—his intentness on the Supreme and devotion to Him—is what he too is determined for. All actions he does wide awake to this, his Niyata (determined) nature, the *Gita* calls Jnana (XIII: 7-10). This state of Jnana has also been called Daivi Sampat in it. The chief characteristic of a state of Jnana or of Daivi Sampat is that their possessor is keenly alive to a sense of his obligations to the Supreme. This is the same as Yoga or Bhakti for Him and he is impelled in all his undertakings by this impulse. All actions done with a yearning for the Supreme as mentioned above are Yajnas. When doing actions that way attachment to actions and fruits thereof are absent in the doer. He has resigned these in favour of the Supreme of whose reality his mind is fully aware. On this account he remains free from all bondage or attachment which is in the nature of Karma to compel otherwise. He derives the inner happiness. The *Gita* emphatically opines that the cause of man's bondage to Karma is due to his egoistic attachment to the execution or fruit of his actions. This is why it proclaims that one who is free from attachment to the doing of Karma or its fruit on his own account becomes freed from bondage. Those who have thus overcome the bondage of Karma attain to the status in Brahma (Brahmi Stithi). Having lived in this perfect state for a time the man who follows the Sukla path in due course attains

to the final state of Brahma Nirvana. This Brahma Nirvana is a state of permanence and infallibility of the Brahmi Stithi. Brahma Nirvana is the end and aim of every being expressed in the Brahma. He who attains to this state has done his part in creation and verily, lives in the Brahma eternally free.

It is possible however that there may be digressions from this ordained Sukla path due to some failure of the Sattvic impulse and the predominance of the Rajasic impulse in man. When this happens both Adhyatma Bhava and Yoga Bhava are absent in him. Yet high altruistic motives and emotions may prevail. The *Gita* denotes this as the Sankhya path. Sattvic spirit of enquiry (jijnasa) is the dominant impulse in this path. Self-abnegation and the pursuit of unselfish motives become the highest ideal. These are technically known in the *Gita* as Tapa and Dana. The Sankhya path and these ideals which it comprises are both appreciated by the *Gita*. It says that the pursuit of these ideals brings the highest enjoyments of this world and the next. But it results at the same time in an attachment to Karma or its fruit and this in its turn entails bondage in spite of the Sattvic nature. Rebirth occasioned by Sattvic bondage is as inevitable as rebirth occasioned by Rajasic or Tamasic bondage. Inveterate as rebirth is it is yet Sattvic. Such rotation of Sattvic rebirths and the due fulfilment of the inexorable course of the Yajna-chakra may continue through an endless cycle with its agreeable results. Still such a state of being is Rajasic and is

described in the *Gita* as the middle (Madhya) path (XIV: 18).

Experiences through lives in this state may breed in the person attachment to the higher path of Yoga. Should this happen, faith (shraddha) in the Supreme first dawns in him and then ripens into Bhakti or Yoga. With the growth of attachment to the Supreme he may still pursue his own old ideals of Tyaga and Dana and strive for these for His sake. Then, even these become Yajnas and the man will have entered the Sukla path and outgrown the Sankhya path.

One who is bereft of the spirit of both Adhyatma and Sankhya ideals becomes an Adhibhuta, that is to say, a prey to the influences of Prakritic tendencies in him. Such a one takes to Vikarma (misdeeds) to satisfy his sensual inclinations. In him Kama, Krodha, and Lobha (desire, anger, and greed) run riot. He runs after sensual joys and derives them with herculean effort. When reaction sets in and he meets with self-earned misery, with overwhelming self-conceit he tries to escape them by means at once demoniac and dangerous. In consequence of such terrible misdeeds evil rebirths, cruel and hazardous, and endless misery in their wake befall him as a matter of course. Driven to repentance by their severity and in the agony of despair he harkens to the still small voice of Adhyatma or Sankhya innate in him but which he had wantonly lost beyond trace. He cries for succour to the Supreme abiding in his heart in spite of him, to take him out of the morass into which his own blindness had led him. Served with immediate succour by the Supreme

his faith in Him grows. Faith matures into Bhakti and with a rising tide of Daivi Sampat in him he steps into the Sukla path. Or if Sankhya tendencies precede he tarries a while and practises Dana and Tapa in the 'middle state'. In due course with ripening faith and Bhakti he enters the Sukla path. But by some given to the demoniac path the state of repentance is never reached. They go headlong down the slippery path of extreme default, persist in ever deepening heinous deeds and in the end go to perdition the destiny of the dark path (XVI: 20-21).

COURSE OF THE TEACHING THROUGH THE CHAPTERS

In Chapter I is described the dejection of Arjuna. In Chapter II it has been first pointed out to Arjuna that his reasonings in a depressed state of mind and his decision not to fight are improper. In this portion of the Chapter there is just enough said to dislodge him from the stand he had taken and nothing constructive is said. This part of the teaching is called 'Sankhya'. Having explained this Sankhya aspect in about twenty-eight verses Sri Krishna immediately proceeds to launch on His science of Buddhi-yoga which really matters for Arjuna. Explanations about this science of Buddhi-yoga in all necessary detail, from the standpoint of both Sri Krishna and Arjuna, continue to the very end of the eighteenth Chapter. This (2nd) Chapter however contains only a sketchy outline of the science of Buddhi-yoga; but refers to its greatness, perfection, adaptability to practical life as well as to the highest conditions of Brahmi-sthiti and Brahma nirvana-

the acme of Vedantic thought and life eternal.

In Chapter III Arjuna's initial difficulty to grasp this sovereign Yoga is taken up, *viz.*, his fallacies about Karma, and to the end of Chapter IV this subject is thrashed out from the angle of Buddhi-yoga. Karma enjoined in Buddhi-yoga cannot certainly countenance Arjuna's idea of Sannyasa—the refusal of Karma. Yet there is in it a different though vital element of real and effective Sannyasa—concludes Sri Krishna. This new aspect of Sannyasa is the subject matter of Chapter V. Its obvious characteristic is that one has to achieve it not by refusing Karma but by engaging in it. And such a one possesses Yoga as a *sine qua non*.

In Chapter VI this Yoga is the subject under consideration. It is the very life breath of Buddhi-yoga. Nay, the heart of the secret science of Adhyatma taught in the *Gita* is this attitude of Yoga. It is due to this Yogic attitude that all Karmas become Yajnas and are cured of their tendency to compel bondage. The doer though engaged in Karma achieves the highest Sannyasa. This Yoga is the be all and end all of all creatures in creation. It exceeds all notions of Tapa and Dana and Karma. Sri Krishna is the presiding Godhead of this cult of Yoga and whoever dedicates his innermost Atma to Him is the most noble among Yoggins (VI: 47).

Karma, Sannyasa, and Yoga are not mere words in the *Gita*. They are mantras. Arjuna has been led into a full knowledge of the inward significance and essence of these Mantras in the first six

chapters and is now sufficiently equipped to grasp the full significance of the teaching delivered to him by Sri Krishna in His words of deep meaning. Yoga is the means and Sri Krishna is the end of human effort in this creation. This is the final truth which emerges from the science of Buddhi-yoga. To be able to grasp it the Buddhi must achieve or awaken to a capacity for Vijnana—Super-vision. Vijnana is actual knowledge derived or experienced by the Atmic nature of man about the Supreme. In the absence of Vijnana no amount of mere eclectic or Sankhya knowledge—ever dry as dust—will suffice. This is why Sri Krishna taught Vijnana in addition to Jnana in the *Gita* (VII: 2). Faith is the seed embedded in human nature from which Vijnana grows. Faith blooms into devotion, devotion blossoms into Yoga. Yoga leads to Vijnana and Vijnana to a correct vision of the Supreme. Thus faith, devotion, Yoga and Vijnana step by step achieve for man real happiness, freedom from bondage, Brahmi Sthiti and Brahma-nirvana. These are the highest objectives for him in creation.

From chapter seven to twelve phases of the subject as above described have been explained to Arjuna from various viewpoints. His doubts have been met and removed. His desire for demonstration had been acceded to, and he had been perfectly equipped with Jnana and Vijnana.

Thus far Vedantic terms have been studiously eschewed. A new system of technical terms, at once simple and suggestive, was coined for the occasion by giving new significance to old generic words, and the *Gita* tenets were hammered out and shaped

so as to satisfy the common sense of the common man. This same subject is again explained from the Vijnana standpoint but in the hackneyed terminology of Vedanta in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters.

The gist of all the teachings covered by the previous chapters has been epitomised in the fifteenth chapter. In it is to be found the quintessence of the science of Buddhi-yoga, its *modus operandi* of Adhyatma comprising Jnana and Vijnana. Sri Krishna invokes this science here as the science of the sciences and proclaims that to know the Supreme (Purushottama) in principle is the highest achievement of Jnana. Having explained to Arjuna the royal road of the *Gita* so far, Sri Krishna turns in chapter sixteen to an explanation of

the condition of straggling and erring souls who digress and wander away from it. We may say that the main teaching in the *Gita* ends with this chapter.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters lingering doubts expressed by Arjuna towards the end have been taken up and cleared to his satisfaction. And finally, in the concluding verses of the last chapter Sri Krishna has delivered to Arjuna the imperative dictum of His perfect and saving discourse and the duty devolving on him in view thereof, in words at once full of pathos, heartily impressive, and surcharged with affectionate solicitude for Arjuna's Sreya and for his liberty to decide the issue for himself.

ETHICAL THINKING IN EURIPIDES

By K. Krishnan Nair, M.A.

EURIPIDES was one of those great souls in the world of thought, who in their inquiry of the ideal conduct, declare a war on all that is false and ignoble in humanity and by sheer grace of brain power compel attention.

His plays embody hard intense thinking without ceasing to be the highest works of art. And he uses dramatic technique with the steady purpose of eliminating all interferences to clear thinking.

There are two technical devices, which are the special invention of Euripides: the Prologue and the *deus ex machina*. The Prologue arose as a substitute for playbills and is used by Euripides as an explanatory first

act. He used little known legends, or unusual versions of those well-known, and is therefore anxious to eliminate all possibilities of imperfect transmission of the particular problems dealt with. The resolution of the drama by the appearance of a god or goddess, commanding, explaining, or prophesying, serves the same purpose, by showing that the dramatist does not deal with a closed system of events, but merely focusses attention on a certain length of a long and perhaps endless chain. In thus taking into account the very distant consequences and the very remote origins of events, Euripides reveals himself as aware of the fact

that before any theory of experience can be constructed things must be seen in their entirety.

Wherever a dramatic crisis develops which, by the tremendous excitement it induces in us, is likely to destroy our steady and luminous grasp of events, the chorus restores us to serenity by bringing solace from the world of music. But if this relief is in the nature of a pure escape we forget rather than think with composure on the problem before us. It is here that the genius of Euripides is most clearly revealed. In one of his plays, *Medea*, provoked by the disloyalty of her husband, Jason, for whom she had sacrificed much, takes terrible revenge by killing her children. From the grips of the tremendous fever of this moment, we are wafted away, by a song of the chorus, not indeed to a realm of hushed serenities, but to a similar scene, the murder of her children by a woman in legend, who later perished in the wide salt sea. The one episode is as poignant as the other, but our mind is eased of its pain because the story is an old, unhappy, far-off tale wherein we are not called upon to interfere, its grim horror already effaced by the hand of time. Turning away, we yet seem to linger over the tragedy of the present. The song confers upon us a gift which only a slow progress of years can bring to us—detachment and the opportunity for serene reflection. We ponder over things that are with the calm of mind with which we contemplate things that have been.

Equipped with such technical mastery, Euripides takes up problems in psychology and ethics for thorough study. In the character of Heracles,

who, in a fit of madness, kills his own wife and children and decides to end his own life when he comes to his senses, he studies the problem of suicide. The calamity breeds the feeling that the gods are against him, and this destroys the will to live because one cannot hope to fight against the ultimate powers. But suicide is also looked upon as a defiance as well, against the hostile gods, as a protest, and the only one in one's power against their injustice. With the exhaustion of the will to live the conviction grows that the present blow is beyond endurance and the remonstrance of friends that he has endured worse things falls on unheeding ears. The man begins to hug his sorrow and the decision to end his life grows in strength. Suicide is a punishment for crime, an expiation for sin, and an escape from the criticism of an unsympathetic world and the even more intolerable pity of those who still care for him. The touching offer of a friend to share his sins and sufferings makes him begin to dimly perceive his own worth and the danger is over when he begins to think of suicide as the most unmanly escape from the tragic vicissitudes of life.

Euripides reveals the same luminous insight in his examination of the ideals of mankind. His own patriotic devotion to Athens was not based on the mere fact that he was an Athenian, but on the fact that Athens was a city of enlightenment. This high conception of patriotism is embodied in the character of Theseus, the legendary king of Athens, who offers to share the pollution of his friend, Heracles. And whereas it was the ancient

practice to treat the bodies of men slain in battles of unjust aggression as polluted and either refuse them burial or only let slaves tend them, Theseus shows them love himself.

It is not a wonder that the imperialistic aspirations of Athens should embitter a thinker to whom patriotism was but another name for the fervent love of exalted social conduct. He has given us some startlingly original studies of the consequences of violence and injustice.

In *Medea*, he lays bare the two-fold evil of cruelty; it not only causes pain to the victim but makes him a worse man. When Jason, for whom she had sacrificed her all, contemplates another marriage, the love of Medea is turned to hatred and she plans a terrible vengeance. And we cannot blame her. It is not that she does not know the hideousness of the crime she contemplates. She knows it well enough. But the injustice creates an emotional mood and with it a momentum towards a particular type of action, clearly known to be bad:

'Yea, I know to what bad things I go, but louder than all thought doth cry

Anger.'

And because the crime was done under the tremendous pressure of burning hatred and had not the sanction of the whole personality, it created fresh anguish. Thus when Medea hears the laments of the bereaved father she cries, 'Oh, thy voice! It hurts me sore!'

The theme of the *Electra* is the famous mother-murder in Greek legend, which has been dramatized by all the three tragic dramatists. In the absence of Agamemnon at Troy, Clytemnestra, his wife carries

on an unchaste association with Aegisthus and, on his return, murders him. Later Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, bidden by Apollo, revenges his father by murdering his mother.

Sophocles knows no disquietude in handling this terrible theme. For him this terrible act is the mere fulfilment of justice. Aeschylus feels its horror. It is a sin, which must, however, be committed because a god has willed it so. Euripides gives the whole story a startlingly individual version. He refuses to regard the act even as a pure revenge. In the passionate hatred of Electra, who instigates her brother Orestes to the crime, the devotion to the father who is unjustly slain is mixed with all sorts of personal resentments and jealousies. While she has been given as wife to a peasant, lest a princely bridegroom should prove a rival to Aegisthus for the throne, and has to work arduously, her mother lives in the midst of splendour, adorned with rich raiments and jewels of gold. To show how far personal jealousies can cloud one's judgment Euripides represent Electra as accusing Aegisthus of drunkenly desecrating her father's tomb and later recognizing the fever in her blood which makes her see everything in a distorted manner and lead her to utter accusation which she herself knows to be true. Such an abnormal type of mind can never be a fit instrument of justice. And if a god ordained this terrible act, was he a god of light? Orestes, sore beset by the conflict within him asks:

'Stay! How if some fiend of Hell
Hid in god's likeness, spake that
oracle?'

The numerous legends about the olympian gods show them up in no flattering light and Euripides on several occasions uttered violent blasphemy, if blasphemy it is to condemn immoral conduct, whether ascribed to man or god. We do not know whether he had any firm belief in Providence, and since we know that he did not believe in an after-life, in which the sufferings of this world might find compensation, his attitude to the problem of suffering becomes one of acute interest. His views on this cardinal problem in experience find expression in that tremendous play the *Trojan Women*, which begins as a study of war and climbs to dizzy heights.

In this play, the proudest legendary achievement of the Greeks, the sacking of Troy, is studied, with startling but characteristic individuality, from the point of view of the vanquished and of the weak among the vanquished, the women of Troy assembled on the seashore to be taken as captives to Greece. While the waves tinged with the red reflected from the burning city sing a low dirge, Hecuba, the wife of Priam, and the mother of the fallen heroes drains the cup of suffering to the lees and sinks the great anguish of mind, the meaning of all that has happened. A terrible war has been fought involving the suffering of great multitudes. Why? Because a woman who fled from her husband and who would perhaps fly again, should be brought back home. The war brought terrible suffering to the vanquished. The men have been put to the sword and the women will be carried off as slaves to distant Greece ' perchance to share a Greek's

bed in the dark'. The victors too had to suffer untold anguishes. The bravest among them were cut down in a strange and angry land. And did any fruit come of it all, which might compensate the sad waste of lives? There was a fruit, but the seeds of it were the seeds of still further suffering. The wine of victory going to his head. Ajax ravished Cassandra while she was clinging to the image of Pallas. For this Pallas punished the Greeks with long years of wandering before they reached their homes. It is always thus in wars. Victory breeds a hysterically exultant psychology in the victors, which obscures their sense of right and wrong and forces them to sin deeply and it is decreed that they shall reap the harvest of their sins.

Whercin does refuge lie? Not indeed with the gods, who, according to Hecuba have betrayed man, but in the grandeur of the human soul, that can call up tremendous reserves of energy and rise to the detached contemplation of this coil of suffering in which it is enmeshed.

' All is well

Had He not turned us in His hand
and thrust

Our high things low and shook our
hills as dust

We had not been this splendour,
and our wrong

An everlasting music for the song
Of earth and heaven.

It is a tremendous utterance this doctrine that the human soul in its strength can subjugate the awful and transform it into the sublime. But only to very great minds is given the power to perceive the strange lovelessness of Kali, the Terrible Mother.

REAL WORSHIP

By Swami Vivekananda

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony; in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping God (Siva) is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by God, and those that are impure, and yet try to teach religion to others, will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship, but internal worship and purity are the real things. Without them, external worship would be of no avail. Therefore, you must all try to remember this. People have become so degraded in this Kali-Yuga (Iron Age) that they think they can do anything, and then can go to a holy place, and their sins will be forgiven. If a man goes with an impure mind into a temple, he adds to the sins that he had already, and goes home a worse man than when he entered it. A place of pilgrimage is a place which is full of holy things and holy men. But if holy people live in a certain place, and if there is no temple, even that is a place of pilgrimage. If unholy people live in a place where there may be a hundred temples, the holiness has vanished from that place. And it is most difficult to live in a place of pilgrimage, for if sin is committed in any ordinary place it can easily be removed, but sin committed in a place of pilgrimage cannot be removed. This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees God (Siva) in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships God (Siva). And if he sees God (Siva) only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man, seeing God (Siva) in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him God (Siva) is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, 'How beautiful is the face of my master,' and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? God (Siva) is that

master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical and does nothing, only talking about Siva's beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of God's (Siva's) children, all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Siva? Certainly he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve God (Siva) must serve His children—must serve all creatures in the world first. It is said in the Scripture that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind. Let me tell you again that you must be pure and help any one who comes to you as much as lies in your power. And this is good Karma. By the power of this, the heart becomes pure, and then God (Siva) who is residing in every one, will become manifest. He is always in the heart of every one. If there is dirt and dust on a mirror, we cannot see our image. So ignorance and wickedness are the dirt and dust that are on the mirror of our hearts. Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He who thinks 'I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything'; he who thinks 'I will get to heaven before others, I will get freedom before others' is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, 'I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will even go to hell, if by doing so I can help my brothers.' This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to God (Siva) than anybody else, whether he knows it or not. And if a man is selfish, even though he has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage and painted himself like a leopard, he is still further off from God (Siva).

—Compiled from *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*.

God is the Reality, the world of phenomena is illusion. The whole Universe serves one as his body, when he feels the Universal Soul as his very Self.

You have to keep yourself all the time upon the rock of renunciation; and taking your stand firmly upon that vantage-ground, giving yourself up entirely to any work that presents itself, you will not be tired, you will be equal to any duty.—*Swami Ram Tirtha*.

IS RENUNCIATION AN EVIL?

By **Brahmachari Bhaktichaitanya**

EVERY normal human being wants to enjoy life with a passionate gusto. It is not uncommon to hear him argue, amidst his mad search after the so-called happiness, that asceticism is the most pernicious and perverse doctrine, and that unless humanity is freed from its evil leaven, the structure of the society would go to pieces. Considering the paucity of ascetics and the unpopularity of the institution of monasticism, one wonders how society is menaced from the blitzkrieg of the cloister. Indeed from time immemorial asceticism has proved to be a veritable mystery to many. Life with all its glamour presents itself to man through the portals of domestic and social bonds. So anyone who endeavours to sever his connection with his family will be cutting off the anchored chains of life and will drift in the open sea like a ship-wrecked mariner. From this superficial standpoint anchoretic seclusion appears to the social man as a transportation from life to death.

THE OTHER STANDPOINT

But the same problem has been viewed from another standpoint. Renunciation is, in accordance with the recognized doctrines of the great religions of the world, a principle of life. It is not at all an escape from life. Turning back to the long vistas of time we find that the lives of the great monks of the past have acted as a unique

and unifying influence on our civilization. During the dark ages when the feudal barons were engaged in perpetual warfare among themselves, it was the monk who kept the torch of learning bright in his dark cell. In India, the land of renunciation, the glorious tradition of Sannyasa has been well preserved from the pre-Buddha times down to our own era. Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Vidyaranya, to quote only a few, were not only saints of the first magnitude but also were teachers of light and learning. In recent times the twin personalities of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have shown to the world by their example and precept the eternal value of Sannyasa. We owe all that is best and highest in our culture to the ancient monastic order.

RENUNCIATION IS COMMON TO ALL

Whether a man is a householder or a monk he has to renounce to some extent and suffer self-chosen hardships in order to achieve his own ends. The call for renunciation need not necessarily proceed from the same motive in all individuals. Some one may feel an inner call in the name of patriotism and renounce everything for the service of his beloved motherland. How many noble sons and daughters of India are gladly suffering behind the prison bars even at this moment to achieve their object? Are their self-

inflicted sacrifices in any way inferior to that of a monk who has burnt his boats in pursuit of Truth? Similarly we find many among artists, scientists, and musicians sacrificing their pleasures according to their own conception of happiness. So it is a matter of observation that man consciously or unconsciously deprives himself of some pleasure or other in accordance with the development of his intellect, will, and sentiment.

If abstinence and self-discipline can be practised in other spheres of life, why should an ascetic's renunciation be a victim of gibe and sneer at the hands of people when the highest value of life is concerned? Renunciation is an indispensable factor in the spiritual practice. 'All are mad in this world,' says the Swami Vivekananda in his telling phrase, 'some are mad after gold, others after women, and some after God; if drowning is to be the fate of man, it is better to be drowned in an ocean of milk than in a pool of dung.' These words require no elucidation.

NO SPIRITUAL LIFE WITHOUT RENUNCIATION

But a lay advocate exclaims in a complaisant mood, 'Why should a man flee from his home and then make a violent effort to cut off the sense-bound mind? One can live in whatever environment or station he is placed and practise devotion by non-attachment, purity, and self-control.' This is little more than a piece of rhetoric. All people are not king Janakas to feel equally even if one hand

were to be cut off and the other smeared with perfumes. Further, no champion of Sannyasa exhorts any man in the street to fly away from his sweet home unless the aspirant's whole being is consumed by the fire of god-realization. Sri Ramakrishna in his own inimitable way says that the novice should intensely feel for God like a suffocated man who is gasping for a breath of air under water. All the great teachers agree that the spiritual novice has to snap the strong cords of human affection and annihilate the craving for the sense-enjoyments if he has to absolutely plunge in the ocean of divine bliss.

Marital relation often destroys the independence of man. He has to devote all his attention for the well-being of his family, leaving no time to ponder over the problems of life and death. The spiritual aspiration in him dies, the moment he gets himself entangled in the meshes of domestic ties. Will Durant in his treatment on Friedrich Nietzsche quotes: 'Where the highest philosophical thinking is concerned, all married men are suspect . . . It seems to me absurd, that one who has chosen for his sphere the assessment of existence as a whole should burden himself with the cares of family, with winning bread, security, and social position for wife and children.' How true it is in the case of one who has chosen for his sphere the ultimate goal of human existence. The same author quotes the following sentence from "Lonely Nietzsche", which vividly portrays the utter

helplessness of a bound soul: 'The wind blew through my keyhole, saying, "Come!" My door cunningly opened of itself, saying, "Go!" But I lay fettered by my love unto my children.' Only a prince Siddhartha can break through the bondages of mind and matter.

While admitting the fact that it is quite possible for exceptionally great souls to live a life of purity and detachment without ever renouncing their positions in the world, we cannot, however, prevent them if they choose to fly away as itinerant monks. Besides, they may do immense good to the world if they keep on moving and boldly proclaim the doctrines without any kind of hindrance. How the world would be poorer today if Buddha, Christ, and Rama-krishna would remain in their own homes like good house-holders!

RENUNCIATION AND SERVICE AS NATIONAL IDEALS

True renunciation is always inseparable from service. Swami Vivekananda says that he who righteously renounces devotes himself to universal service. To a person who has his own vested interests it will be very difficult to dedicate his life for the service of others. First he has to maintain himself and his little family circle, and then only he can widen his sympathy to others. Sincere service demands true renunciation. The glory of renunciation can be exemplified when one devotes himself heart and soul for the service of others with an equal eye. Swami Vivekananda was the em-

bodiment of spiritual power which manifested itself as renunciation. He declared that 'Renunciation and Service are the two national ideals of India; intensify her in those two channels and all the rest will take care of itself.' If these twin national ideals can influence the youth of India, the dream of the great Swamiji will be realized.

RENUNCIATION IS THE BASEMENT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

Unqualified surrender of all worldly pursuits precedes the dawn of spiritual consciousness. If spirituality is the highest goal of human life, it demands the greatest sacrifice, namely, absolute surrender of everything we hold dear. Sri Ramakrishna has made explicit more than anything else that renunciation is the basement of the spiritual ideal. Our scriptures also unanimously agree in holding the opinion that immortality can be attained by renunciation alone. We read in the *Mahanarayana Upanishad*: 'Some have attained immortality not by acts, nor progeny, nor wealth, but by renunciation alone.' According to Manu, 'Many thousands of celebrated Brahmancharins and thousands of Brahmanas have attained immortality without procreating children.' *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* declares that 'desire for offspring leads to the crematory; non-desire for such things leads to immortality.'

RENUNCIATION OF THE EGO

To despise merely outward things does not constitute a San-nyasin's ideal of renunciation. He

is expected to turn inward and destroy the seeds of vanity, lust, anger, hatred, and all other mental aberrations. There cannot be any spiritual elevation if the carnal instinct is not destroyed, in spite of the outward show of renunciation. In short, absolute purity in thought, word, and deed turns the whole heart to the Lord.

The Sannyasin's renunciation cannot reach its zenith without the destruction of his egotism. We have an internal world which is based on the 'I' consciousness. The most difficult thing in the world, probably, is to give up this ego to which even an unattached monk clings tenaciously. Willynilly a Sannyasin has to reduce his ego to a nothingness, if he has to transcend the phenomenal values of life. There is a singular incident in the life of Sadasiva Brahma, a saint principally given to meditation, and one of the greatest Rajayogins of South India. This impresses our minds in bold relief about the strong persistence of the ego even in those who stand very high in spiritual attainment. On a certain occasion Sadasiva was lying in a field resting his head on a mound. Some passers-by seem to have sarcastically opined that even a man like Sadasiva was resorting to a mound to rest his head. Later on when Sadasiva was again found lying flatly on the earth without resting his head on any object, some person gave vent to his feeling that this great saint was painfully sensitive to public opinion! Venkatnatha, his great

contemporary, after learning this curious incident remarked: 'Even to those who consider the world as worthless as a blade of grass and who have mastered all the secret sciences, even to such it is difficult to cease to be slaves of the strum-pet fame.' So it is possible for those mendicants only who have the distinctive attribute of possessing no ego to purify their nature by the Yoga of renunciation and fix their mind on the highest truth.

CONCLUSION

India which has Moksha as the ultimate end in its scheme of life will always defend the institution of monasticism. It can never reconcile sensuality with the true spirit of religion. If India today can boast of any permanent glory, it is due to the spiritual scheme of life which is based on Nivritti. It would be the height of folly for India's misguided sons to criticize the spirit of monasticism which has enriched the world with the things of intellect and spirit.

It is idle to draw any contrast between the monk and the householder as if they clash with each other in their views of life. According to Indian tradition the life of the monk is only a natural outcome of an ideal household life. The highest ideal is as much the birthright of the householder as that of the recluse. The monk, not at all being chained to any worldly pursuit of life, has greater chance and scope for the realization of his ideals in contra-distinction to the householder who has

less opportunities to make a bid for freedom. This is all the difference.

There is pleasure in the poverty of the monk, edification in his holiness, and a lure in the subtlety

of his philosophy. How can he soar in the empyrean heights of divine life if the coarse necessities of mundane existence drag him down to the emporium of temporal strife and sorrow?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored: By A. Cockern. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pages 158. Price 6 sh. net.

Alchemy has generally been associated with witchcraft or black magic and charlatany—it has never been regarded as a science—though it has been acknowledged that the physical sciences, especially chemistry, is indebted to it to a very large extent. The author of the book under review has sought to establish the scientific basis of alchemy and its place in human growth and well-being in all aspects of life.

In writing a Foreword to the book, Sir Dudley Borron Myers, O.B.E., states: 'For over twenty years he has been a keen student of metallurgy, bio-chemistry, and bacteriology, and it will thus be seen that in the claims he now advances in this book he writes with that measure of authority which a life devoted to the alleviation of suffering, and to the effective treatment of human ailments, undoubtedly confers on him.'

We see in this book a brief but clear exposition of what alchemy has done for mankind, how it was being practised in the past by men of culture belonging to different countries and races with life-long devotion, and how the validity of their conclusions can be verified by regular laboratory research. The author says that he has done this himself and pleads for an unbiased approach to the subject.

He is deeply earnest and makes the impressive statement in the concluding portion of the book: 'Alchemy brings us the vision of the heights to which man may attain; it teaches us that he is Triune, that he is spiritual, mental, and physical; that his future is far greater than at present can be envisaged; that, Life is Law and Wisdom'. (p. 130).

The book will well repay perusal; the zeal and earnestness of the author is catching. S.R.

Heaven Lies within Us: By Theos Bernard. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Pages 256. Price 15 sh.

This is a book on the science and practice of Yoga—Hatha and Raja Yoga with a Tantric background—by an American writer. His theme is that the science of Yoga offers the best means of obtaining health, mental and emotional poise, and spiritual illumination. It is an extremely interesting book, and the presentation is very clear and lucid. He has given an account as to how he happened to think of the pursuit of the science and practice of Yoga, how he sought and found teachers in India, how he was helped by them, and how he ultimately acquired the necessary knowledge of Yoga and practised it under their guidance, in all its various stages, and how eventually found what he sought with all his mind and heart.

When he was very ill as a student in the University infirmary he heard

his doctor tell the nurse that he would not live. From this he felt as if he were in a tense atmosphere. Later on in spite of the protests of the doctors his mother took him away to his native town. When he got better he went for a change to the Dragoon Mountains in Arizona. He had taken with him books filled with Eastern wisdom. He states in his book that his mother's own life had been a quest after health and happiness, a quest in which she had left no stone unturned, and that it was she that tried to sow the seeds of Eastern philosophical and religious thoughts in his youthful imagination.

In the course of his studies the following passage from Adam Beck's *Story of Philosophy* appears to have made a very profound impression on him and offered him hope:

'Infinite energy is at the disposal of any man if he knows how to get it, and this is part of the science of Yoga.'

From then onward he pursued his search, came to India, sought to Gurus and gave himself over with all his being to practise what he was taught by them.

The book is a fine one and is bound to be of great interest and help to those who are Yoga-minded.

S. R.

Bhagavatika of "Kalyan"
(Hindi): Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U. P. Pages 1070. Price Rs. 4-8-0. Price of the second Number containing the

Bhagavata-maha-purana in smallest type Re. 0-8-0. Subscription for the *Kalyan* including the Special Number (for one year) India Rs. 5-12-0. Foreign Rs. 7-10-0.

We gladly welcome this beautiful Special Number of the well-known Hindi monthly, *Kalyan*. In this number we get mainly a lucid, flowing, Hindi rendering of the great *Bhagavata*—the sweetest symposium of Dharma, Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga, and Vairagya. Sri *Bhagavata* is the very representative of Bhagavan, the Supreme Lord, on the authority of its own statement. So, in whichever form it is presented it is a boon to the spiritually-minded people. In this volume we have also about two dozen articles, small and big, helpful in appreciating the greatness of the main part. As usual with the Gita Press publications the present one also is printed with very high taste and profusely illustrated with several suggestive drawings and colour plates. Above all, the price fixed is a marvel of cheapness in view of the high excellence of the production and the present conditions of the printing world. The second issue is a sort of an appendage; it contains the entire text along with two Mahatnyas in the smallest type. It is interesting as an exhibit. With the help of a magnifying glass it may be used for daily use also. The types are clear and the whole text of 18,000 Granthas appears in only 75 pages. We recommend these publications to all who are interested in the *Bhagavata*.

A flow of words is no proof of wisdom.

A detractor is his own foe and the world's enemy.

All is not butter that comes from the cow.

All worldly happiness consists in opinion.

Begging courtesy is selling liberty.

Be just to all but trust not all.

Bells call others to churches but go not themselves.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Report of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, U. S. A.

September 1939 to August 1940

The Season's activities were resumed with the two Sunday Services, one at 11 o'clock in the morning, at the Vedic Temple, and the other at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the Masonic Temple. In the mornings, Swami Devatmananda spoke on practical spiritual subjects; in the evenings however, he dealt with general psychological and metaphysical ones. Both the Services were opened with music, prayer and a short meditation. The two regular classes also, were held on Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 8 p.m., in the hall of the Vedic Temple. On Tuesdays, the 11th Skandha of the *Bhagavatam* was taken as the text book for study; and on Thursdays, the *Vivekachudamani*. Special instructions on meditation were given on Thursdays, as a part of the study class. And, at the conclusion of every class, a period of time was devoted to the discussion of pertinent subjects.

The following events were duly observed as regular items in the Society's calendar of activities. (i) The worship of the Divine Mother (Durga Pooja), was duly conducted by the Swami for three days. (ii) Christmas was observed in a special service. (iii) New Year's Eve Midnight vigil. (iv) The birthdays of (a) Sri Ramakrishna, (b) Swami Vivekananda, and (c) Lord Buddha, and (v) Easter Sunrise Service at the Ashrama.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda was publicly celebrated with a Hindu dinner in which among others, Leslie Hodge, Conductor of the Portland Philharmonic Orchestra, Lilly Her^z, soloist with the Orchestra, and Dr. B. Young of the Pacific University were guests of honour. The holy occasion was doubly blessed by the presence of Swami Vijaya-

nanda of Buenos Aires, South America, who addressed the gathering on Swami Vivekananda. On Sunday following, February 11, at 11 a.m., Swami Vijayananda formally opened the Meditation Hall at the Ashrama with an inspiring talk. The same evening, he spoke again, before a large and appreciative audience, in the Masonic Temple.

On the Tithi Pooja day of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Devatmananda performed a special worship of the Master; and, on the following Sunday he joined with Swami Vividishananda in Seattle, Wash. in celebrating the Master's Anniversary there. On Friday, March 29, the Master's Birthday was publicly observed here with a Hindu dinner, in which Swami Vividishananda was the honoured speaker. On the following Sunday, he conducted the morning Service at the Ashrama, and gave an illustrated talk on the Life of the Master, at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the Masonic Temple.

The first Easter Sunrise Service was held at six o'clock in the morning, on the Sunrise hill, at the Ashrama. The regular 11 o'clock Service was also held there.

Besides several musical and social evenings in which the members and friends of the Society were entertained with educational pictures, the regular monthly meetings of the Women's League were also held. It enjoyed the privilege of hearing three speakers on their travels and experiences: Mrs. G. B. Wilhelm on the South Sea Islands, Mrs. Archibald on Russia, Germany, and Africa, and Swami Vividishananda on Thibet. During the season, Swami Devatmananda was also invited to speak before the Lions Club of Tigard, Ore., Young Men's Club of McMinnville, Ore., the Theosophical Society of Portland, and the Council of Economic Research of Portland.

Lastly, the Ashrama work has been proceeding steadily, and many improvements had been made on the property in the past year. The Meditation Hall is now being used for Services and meditation.

Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

Swami Vireshwarananda writes:—

For the last forty-one years the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, run by Sannyasins of the Mission, has been filling up a great need in the civic life of the city of Benares. In spite of the fact that Benares is replete with charitable institutions, this institution is yet unique in the Holy city. It shows how the spirit of renunciation in the nation can be utilized for the national uplift without in any way impairing the ideal of renunciation; for here service is rendered to humanity as worship to the Lord manifest in it and so helps to attain salvation. In these days of national reconstruction institutions like this which while holding fast to the spiritual heritage of the nation give it a life in other spheres too, are worthy of support from the whole nation.

The institution was started in the year 1900 with a view to alleviate the sufferings of poor and destitute people who flock to this eternal city with lingering illness, hunger and pain. Due to its great popularity and phenomenal expansion of work, it has risen to be an important centre of medical relief in Benares. This is borne out by the enormous increase in the number of patients treated during the year under review from what it was in its inception.

Short report of the activities in the different departments during the year 1940:

(1) *Indoor General Hospital:* There are 115 beds in all the wards together. The total number of cases treated during the year under review was 2,047 of which 1,363 were cured and discharged, 208 were relieved and discharged, 217 were discharged

otherwise, 126 died, and 133 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The daily average of cases was 110.5. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 275, of which 225 were major cases. The total number of ghat and road side cases admitted was 173.

(2) *Refuge for aged and invalid men:* This refuge contains 25 beds, but owing to want of funds, it was possible to maintain only 6 permanent inmates during the year.

(3) *Refuge for aged and invalid women:* This refuge had 21 inmates and though there is accommodation for 50 invalids many deserving cases had to be refused admission as many beds are not provided for.

(4) *Lachmi Narayan Trust Fund for paralytic patients:* The expenses of 10 paralytic patients were met by this fund. (5) *Chandri Bibi Dharmasala Fund:* Under this head 243 men and women were given food and shelter. (6) *Outdoor Dispensaries:*

The total number of new patients treated at the outdoor dispensaries was 66,075 and the total number of repeated cases was 1,49,067. These include 25,511 new and 63,096 repeated cases treated at the branch outdoor dispensary at Shivalaya.

The daily average attendance was 589.4 and the total number of surgical cases was 855. (7) *Outdoor Relief:*

Permanent relief in the form of cash and food, weekly and monthly, was supplied to 241 persons, most of whom were poor invalids or helpless ladies of respectable families. It cost Rs. 3,149.6.0 in cash (including the annual interest of Rs. 175 derived from the Audhar Chandra Das charity fund) and 137 mds. 19 srs. 12 chts. of rice and atta besides blankets and clothings. (8) *Special and occasional relief:* Under this head help was given to 1,990 persons consisting mostly of poor and deserving students and stranded travellers.

Finance: The total receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 96,493.2.7 and the expenditure to Rs. 66,399.13.10. So far as the General fund is concerned omitting sale of shares,

endowments, and encashments on the receipts side and investment on the expenditure side, the actual receipts and expenditure come roughly to Rs. 38,771 and Rs. 41,252 respectively which means the expenditure far exceeds the income.

The immediate needs of the Home of Service are:

(a) *Endowments for Beds:*

A great number of beds are not endowed. The cost of endowing a bed in the Surgical ward is Rs. 4,000, in the General Ward Rs. 3,000 and in the Invalid Home Rs. 2,500.

(b) *Bedding and clothing:*

These are constantly needed.

(c) *A building for the outdoor dispensary:*

A separate block for the outdoor Dispensary with its various departments is absolutely necessary. The estimated cost of it is Rs. 8,000.

(d) *General fund:*

The number of poor people applying for relief in cash and kind has increased enormously. More striking even than this are the unfortunate victims of Beri Beri epidemic, who were rendered blind during 1936-37. The demands of these people have to be met in this age of crisis and transitions.

We hope such an institution as this will not be handicapped in the good work for want of funds and that generous public will come forward with contributions, which will be thankfully received and acknowledged by,

- (1) The Hony. Asst. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.
- (2) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal.

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.

Scheme and Report, 1938-1940

The Institute was established at Calcutta, on January 29, 1938, in fulfilment of one of the projects of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee. To promote the cultural and spiritual interests of India and the world through an expansive and well-planned scheme is the purpose of its existence. During the period under review various classes and study circles were formed and different classical works were studied with the help of distinguished scholars. Altogether 92 lectures were delivered in the Institute by scholars of eminence coming from various countries of the world, on topics of social, cultural and religious importance. The meetings were presided over by men of high standing and attended by, on an average, 146 persons. In 1941 a collection of 30,000 volumes costing over Rs. 1,00,000 was added to the Library of the Institute received as a gift from Dr. B. B. Mukherjee. The Students' Home run by the Institute accommodated during the period under notice 12 College students, of whom 3 passed M.A., and M.Sc. examinations. The Institute has about half-a-dozen useful publications to its credit. *The Cultural Heritage of India* in three volumes deserves special mention as it is unique in bulk and worth. The Institute, started under best auspices, in the first city of India fulfils a distinct need and has scope for very great future development. A permanent edifice of its own with necessary equipments and arrangements is therefore an immediate need. For this a sum of two lakhs of rupees is required.

Better do it than wish it done.

Birth is much but breeding is more.

Calumny and conjecture may injure innocence itself.

Clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature.

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THE PATH TO LIBERATION IN LIFE

जीवन्मुक्तत्वमेवंविधभिति वचसा किं फलं दूरदूरे
तन्माशुद्धुदेवं च खलु मनसः शोधकं भक्तिं न्यन् ।
तन्मे विष्णो कृष्णाः त्वयि कृतसकलप्राप्तं भक्तिभारं
येन स्यां मडङ्गु किंविद् गुरुवचनमिलत्वत्प्रवोधस्त्वदात्मा ॥

What does it profit to describe verbally the state of a *Jivanmukta* (the sage who has realized the Bliss of Liberation and Enlightenment while living on the earth)? Such a state, I dare say, is really far, far from one whose thoughts are impure; and, indeed, there is no other means of making the mind stainless except through *bhakti*—adoration and service of the Supreme Being. That being the condition, O Thou Omnipresent Spirit, grant me perfect devotion for Thee—devotion that demands entire surrender to God of oneself and all that one possesses and does, as a prerequisite. Then, through some saving instruction of my Spiritual Director, I shall realize Thee directly as my own Self; for Thou art my Self.

Narayaniya.

OUR CREED

By Swami Vivekananda

Faith is a wonderful insight and it alone can save, but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism and barring further progress.

Jnana (reason) is all right, but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism. A harmony of all these is the thing required. Rama-krishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipping, adjusting and fulfilling one another. This would be harmony by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds. We avoid that by being a non-sectarian sect, having all the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion.

We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense.

Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is vice; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonised is virtue.

We leave everybody free to know, select and follow whatever suits and helps him. Thus for example, eating meat may help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own peculiarity, but he has no right to criticise the conduct of others, because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some people in their progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his brother.

We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance; the difference between soul and soul is due to the difference in density of these layers of clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual plane—the same Spirit is manifesting through different planes.

We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

We believe that it is the duty of every soul to treat, think of, and behave to other souls as such, i.e., as Gods, and not hate or despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means. This is the duty not only of the Sannyasin but of all men and women.

The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection.

THE SUBLIMITY OF THE YOGAVASISHTHA

By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri

In the *Yogavasishtha* we have one of the highest peaks of the Hindu spiritual genius. We find in it the sublimation of literature by philosophy and philosophy by literature. The author of this great work is a poets' poet and a philosophers' philosopher in that later writers and thinkers were inspired ideologically and even verbally by him. We find in him a wonderful harmony of idealism and realism, of fate and freewill, of optimism and pessimism. The authorship is attributed to Valmiki, and the work is popularly called the *Maharamayana*. But the *Yogavasishtha* belongs to the upper strata of air and higher worlds of being, while the *Ramayana* belongs to the earth and tries to make it a kingdom of God.

The seed of the story is that Sri Rama is overcome by pessimism at the sight of decay and death in the world. Vasishtha, at the desire of Dasaratha, teaches spiritual wisdom to Sri Rama, who thereupon returns to his usual attitude of calm and courage, and is once more that combination which is a unity in trinity and a trinity in unity—renouncer, doer, and enjoyer. The stories of Leila and Chudala form the highlights of the poem and are among the world's highest literature.

The great value of the *Yogavasishtha* is its clear vision of the differentiation of the transitory and the Eternal and of the immanence of the Eternal in the non-eternal. If we pass beyond the desire of the senses to the bliss of the Self, we achieve true liberation and attain real salvation. We can get this only as the

result of self-effort. We must not feebly cry out about or against fate; because fate is only our past deeds and can be conquered by our present deeds. Sama (tranquillity), Vichara (thinking), Santosha (contentment), and Sadhu-sangama (association with wise men) are the means of liberation. The world is but the play of the mind. Time is but ideational sequence. Space is but ideational co-existence. Both are relative to the mind. Causation also is an ideational contribution of the mind. Each mind is therefore the creator of its world, and is held a prisoner therein by desire. Viveka and Vairagya can slay desire and effect our liberation.

Such in brief is the essence of the philosophy of the *Yogavasishtha*. But a more detailed exposition is necessary if we are not contented with mere philosophical discipline, and wish to know its solution of the vital problems of philosophy.

Every system of thought depends eventually on its concept of the nature of the mind; because such a concept will settle the thought-pattern which will express the mental evaluation of the universe. Vasishtha says: *Chittam nabhih kila asyeha manas chakrasya sarvatah*. According to Vasishtha the only source of right knowledge is Pratyksha (direct cognition) in its widest sense of experience or Anubhava. (*Pramanam atra srinu me pratyaksam ne'tarat*). Thus Anumana, or inference, which today is exalted as 'reason' to a very high pedestal, occupies a lower seat, and even Sabda or Word is regarded as being only a vehicle of

another's Anubhava. Hence Sastra and Guru are but aids and are not sources of Anubhava.

न शास्त्रैनापिगुरुणा दृश्यते परमेश्वरः ।

दृश्यते स्वात्मनैवात्मा स्वया सत्त्वस्थया विद्या ॥

If we turn the search-light of introspection or inner cognition on the mind, what do we realise? We can then see that neither extreme Idealism nor extreme Realism can express the full force of Reality or Truth. Mind can cognise the universe because of the essential kinship of both in essence and of a unity underlying both. Chit or Consciousness, is the fundamental substance, of which the brighter child is the Mind and the darker child is Matter. The bold declaration of this basic Truth by Vasishtha is his greatest title to originality as a thinker; because it set the thought of Sankara and others in motion, who built the grand system of Advaita philosophy, though Vasishtha had not worked it out as a system in all its details.

But we must not allow this basic unity to melt away the obvious disparity of thoughts and things. Realism makes them asunder as the poles, while Idealism fuses them into a fictitious unity. The strongest weapon in the armoury of Realism is the persistence of things and the same phenomena making the same impression on different minds. The strongest weapon in the armoury of Idealism is the Dream world. Idealism affirms that just as these thoughts and things are fundamentally one, we can realise that they can be one in the world of our waking state as well. It might well be that the waking state is but a long dream,

whereas a dream is but a short waking. Vasishtha belongs to the Idealist school. Gaudapada too belongs to it. Sankara, however, seems by force of reason compelled to accept it, but still affirms that Jnana is Vastu-tantra and not Purushatantra. Vasishtha expressly affirms his idealism (kalpana Vada) thus:

जाग्रत्स्वप्नदशाभेदो न स्थिरास्थिरते विना ।

समः सदैव सर्वत समस्तोऽहुभवोऽनयोः ॥

I have long felt that this opposition can end and must end only by the cognition of another and yet more basic principle. It is here that Saktism comes in as a guide. It is Bliss that shines as Siva as well as Sakti. Two derivatives or evolutes of Sakti are Spirit and Matter. Both are real. In dream creative Sakti involved in Spirit creates Matter. In the waking state, creative Sakti had already manifested itself as the universe and there is no scope for pure mental creation. But cognition is due to the basic unity of Spirit and Matter because of the involution in them of the higher creative Sakti which is really only the dynamic aspect of Siva or Brahman. In deep sleep Mind and Matter are both withdrawn into Sakti in its Avidya sheath. In super-consciousness, both are withdrawn into the Vidya sheath of Sakti. In Samadhi all is merged in Sakti and even Sakti is merged in Siva, and there is perfect, eternal, infinite supreme Bliss.

The Idealism of Vasishtha is an old strain in Indian thought. One off-shoot of it is Buddhistic Nihilism. Another off-shoot of it is the Anirvachaniya Khyati of the orthodox Advaitin. The Realists naturally attack the Advaitin as Crypto-Bud-

dhist (Prachchhanna Buddha). The Sapta Bhangi Nyaya of Jainism wavers and oscillates between the two extremes of Realism and Idealism. Sankhya thought and the Dualistic schools are frankly realistic; but the latter still affirm an inclusive unity of one sort or another, while the former is rigidly dualistic in regard to Purusha and Prakriti, and affirms the plurality of Purushas.

This is the reason why Vasishtha steers clear of the whirlpools of the Khyatis. In India the battle of the Khyatis has been a deafening din. Vasishtha says that Atma-Khyati, Asat-Khyati, Akhyati, and Anyatha-Khyati are but various manifestations of idealism (Atma-Khyati).

आत्मस्वयातिरसत्त्व्यातिरसत्त्व्यातिः स्वयातिरसत्त्व्यातः ।
इत्येतात्त्विच्चमत्कृत्या आत्मस्वयातेर्विभृतयः ॥

The fact is that the Khyatis in Indian metaphysics like the Rasas in Indian aesthetics, have multiplied in a wonderful and even bewildering manner. There has also been an attempt to announce the basic Khyati just as there has been an attempt to announce the basic Rasa. Vasishtha does not refer to the Anirvachaniya Khyati of the Sankarite school, or the Sat Khyati of the Ramanujite school, as he was earlier than both these teachers. Nor do we find in him the later controversies of Parinama Vada and Vivarta Vada.

There is much in modern science to confirm Vasishtha's idealism. He says that time and space are but mental creations. Einstein's theory of Relativity has familiarised the modern mind with such a view. Professor Eddington says in his work *Space, Time and Gravitation*:

'Einstein has now shown that in physics, time and space are purely relative to the observer and the physical space is now recognised as something definitely dependent upon the limitations of our sense-perceptions of matter. Mathematically many different kinds of space are conceivable' (p. 43). Thus Duration may be a creation by ourselves, a trick of the mind. In the same way Causation (Niyati) also may be a mental creation. Eddington says further in the aforesaid work: 'All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics. And we have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature.' (p. 201).

It was this idea of scientific philosophy which Coleridge anticipated in his well-known verscs, because of his brilliant secundity of mind, though he was not a sound or systematic thinker.

'O Lady! We receive but what we give
And in our life alone does Nature live;
Ours is her wedding garment and her shroud;
And would we aught behold of higher worth
Than this inanimate cold world allowed.
To the poor, loveless, ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud,

Enveloping the earth,—
 And from the soul itself there must
 be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its
 own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds, the life and
 element.'
 'We in ourselves rejoice!
 And thence glows all that charms
 our ear or sight,
 All melodies echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that
 light.'

The weakness in Vasishtha's idealism is twofold. He does not clearly discuss and declare that things are only thoughts and nothing else. If that is a correct view, why should they strike different thinkers in the same way? A tree cannot be, and is not, a tree to one and a camel to another. But the appeal of the tree to different minds is different. Possibly the best solution is that hinted by Vasishtha; viz., that the Atman (call it Brahman, or God, or Self, as you like) is behind Mind and Matter and is the essence immanent in both. Things are God's thoughts and presented to each mind (which also are God's thoughts) as to diverse but similar mirrors, the nature and content of the presentation depending on the angle of vision and the angle of presentations. When Desire is eliminated and its pranks are over, each Jiva realises his essential nature as Atman or Brahman, in his static form of Bliss as Brahman, or his dynamic form of Bliss as Isvara or Sakti, the world being but a subordinate aspect of such dynamic aspect of Bliss. That is why Vasishtha declares: *Brahma'rtha vada vijnana vadayor aikyam eva nah.*

Then the Jiva-construction of the universe is uplifted and sublimated into the Divine construction of the universe wherein Subject and Object are but two aspects of the Bliss of Unity and the unity of Bliss.

This is the reason why we see in Vasishtha the watershed of thought, whence the various rivers of philosophic systems flow down, cribbed and cabined and confined between specially-constructed high banks of system-building. Persons who have got a clear but limited mind would prefer very dogmatic presentations comprehensible by them and acceptable to them. That is just how philosophic systems and religious sects arise. We want trim and small gardens containing flowers of such tints and odours as each one of us likes. We shout defiance and execrations at each other standing at the pricking fences separating the various gardens. But the sunlight that feeds the colours and fragrances of the flowers is but one and the same. The rain that feeds the roots of the plants and the air that gives life to them are one and the same. The basic earth is one and the same. The over-arching sky is one and the same.

Another aspect of the sublimity of the *Yogavasishtha*, besides its grand vision of the unity of Subject and Object, is its grand vision of evolution and involution. At the beginning of each Kalpa the universe is manifested as the concretised expression of the Infinite consciousness, and at the end of each Kalpa it is of itself withdrawn into the infinite consciousness. The *Gita* declares this

idea in a memorable way. (Vide Ch. VIII: verse 18).

The world is but the Absolute in manifestation and nothing more. What is Truth must be the same at all times. The world is Mithya (false), or Sadasat (being and non-being), because it is constantly changing its form. Individuality (Jiva) also, like Jagat (the world), is an appearance of the Absolute (Brahman). Both merge in the Absolute when full realisation is attained.

The sublimest aspect of Vasishtha's thought, however, consists in his vision of self-liberation through the power of the mind. A famous Upnishadic verse says:

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।
बन्धाय विश्यासंगि मुक्षैय निर्विश्यं मनः ॥

The mind is as capable of self-liberation as it is now of self-bondage. It is capable of wonderful Siddhis—far more wonderful than the modern attainment of radio and television. A pure and concentrated and sublimated mind can reflect all that takes place in the world including what is thought by other minds. It alone has got the key to the treasure-chest of happiness. We are bound by Desire and liberated by Love.

As can be expected from such an apostle of self-liberation Vasishtha emphasises Jnana (knowledge) rather than Karma (action) or Bhakti (devotion).

In this respect the highest synthesis of Karma and Bhakti and Jnana is found in the *Bhagavadgita* which, more than the *Yogavasishtha* or any other work, gives us the supreme synthesis of Sadhanas. The great value of *Yogavasishtha* consists in

its emphasis on what we are likely to forget in our desire for maximum effects through minimum means—a desire which we do not find confirmed by the hard facts of life and which is solely due to our weakness and love of ease.

One of the aspects of the sublimity of the *Yogavasishtha* is its consistent emphasis on human effort as being capable of redressing the wrongs of fate which is, after all, only our own past Karma and nothing more. We are all prone to stand aghast at Fate and not to embark upon a career of strenuous endeavour in the path of Atma-jnana. Vasishtha's call is a clarion call in the direction of such endeavour, Paurusha.

स्वार्थप्रापककार्येकप्रयत्नपरता बुधैः ।
प्रोक्ता पौरुषशब्देन सा सिद्धैय शास्त्रयन्तिता ॥
प्राक्तनं पौरुषं तद्वै दैवशब्देन कथ्यते ।
नित्यं स्वपौरुषादेव लोकद्वयहितं मनेत् ॥
बुधैव पौरुषफलं पुरुषत्वमेत-

दात्यप्रयत्नपरतैव सदैव कार्या ।
जगति पुरुषकारकारणेऽस्मिन्
कुरु रघुनाथ चिरं तथा प्रयत्नम् ॥

Vasishtha's supreme greatness as a leader of ethical, social, philosophical, and religious thought is his greatest claim to the homage of men in all time and climes. He preaches the need of purity and tranquillity, of wisdom and discrimination, of self-effort and self-travail in the path of self-liberation. In this effort the study of scripture and the help of pure and wise men and the practice of virtues are powerful aids.

शास्त्रसज्जनसत्कार्यसङ्केतोपहतैनसाम् ।
सारावलोकिनी बुद्धिर्यते दीपकोपमा ॥

Only then can we rise above egoism and attain Yoga or cosmic consciousness.

LORD BUDDHA

By Swami Ranganathananda

A GREAT thinker has said that the history of the world is the history of its greatest men. This is especially true of India whose long history is filled with the life and work of some of the greatest men the world has ever seen. But the men whom India considers great are not kings and military conquerors like Alexander, Charlemagne, or Napoleon; but philosophers and thinkers like Sri Krishna, Bhagavan Buddha, and Sri Sankaracharya. These latter have also been conquerors, but of a different type. In the memorable words of Asoka, India's conquest is through Dharma or Righteousness. They conquered through non-violence and love, and that love is enshrined in the grateful hearts of millions today.

The Upanishads are the fountain-head of not merely the religion of India but of her culture and philosophy as well. The great sages of the Upanishads stand at the very dawn of history as the progenitors and inspirers of a culture and a civilization which, starting like a little hill-stream in the dim antiquity of the Vedas, has come down to us as the mighty river of Indian national life, enriched and ennobled by the valuable contributions of a brilliant galaxy of philosophers and thinkers of the first magnitude. The Indian of today, to whatever section he may belong, whether he knows it or not, is the inheritor of this rich heritage. And every Indian is proud of the fact that this veritable Ganges of Indian

culture has fertilized and nourished not only the people of India but men and women of far and near lands as well.

The first great personality who enriched Indian thought and life, after the sages of the Upanishads, was Bhagavan Sri Krishna. He stands as the great national leader, impressing every department of Indian life with his genius and personality. He is the unfailing source of inspiration for much of Indian mysticism, art, literature, and philosophy. And his great teaching to Arjuna contained in the *Bhagavadgita*, the Song Celestial, was the first attempt made in India to preach religion and philosophy to the masses, and with Sri Krishna begins the evolution of a truly national culture and philosophy. In this he represents the liberal tradition of the Upanishads as opposed to the sacerdotalism of the earlier part of the Vedas. Sri Krishna in the *Gita* opens the door of salvation to one and all, besides showing that all religions lead to the same goal.

‘Those that come to Me, O Arjuna! even if they be the most sinful or be they women, vaishyas or sudras—all attain to the Highest Goal.’¹

‘Through whatever paths men come to Me, I reach them; O Arjuna! all men follow paths which in the end lead to Me alone.’²

The second great teacher who enriched Indian culture and who

¹ *Gita*, IX: 32.

² *Ibid.* IV: 11.

made Indian thought overflow its narrow geographical bounds is Gautama the Buddha, the subject of the present sketch. With the Buddha begins the story of that Greater India which fills the whole of the Asiatic continent with the sweetness and aroma of her spiritual contribution.

Buddha exemplifies in his person the ideal man of the Upanishads and the man of steady wisdom of the *Bhagavadgita*. His life and character gave strength and vigour to many an earlier teaching and idea, and vitalized Indian society for more than a thousand years.

It is a mistake to suppose that Buddha taught something absolutely new or anything hostile to the spirit of the existing philosophy and religion. It is more correct to hold that he taught a purer doctrine and expounded and exemplified a more positive philosophy of life than the prevailing ones of the day. True it is that he preached against the exclusiveness of caste and the excessive ritualism of the Vedic priesthood and taught a religion of moral and spiritual discipline. But, in this, the spiritual and philosophical tradition of India as enshrined in the Upanishads and the *Gita* was behind him. In the words of Sir E. Denison Ross, C.I.E., 'There was nothing absolutely new to the Indians in the teaching of Gautama, and his message could only be intelligible in its original form to the Hindus. The changes he made were in either the cosmogony or the ritual of the Hindus, and could only appeal to those familiar with both.'³

³ Introduction to *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold; (1926) p. XIII.

Rhys Davids, another western scholar and student of Buddhism, also holds that 'it is inaccurate to draw any hard and fast line between the Indian Buddhists and their countrymen of other faiths.'⁴

Sir Edwin Arnold in the preface to his *Light of Asia* points to the same truth when he says that 'the mark of Gautama's sublime teaching is stamped ineffaceably upon modern Brahmanism, and the most characteristic habits and convictions of the Hindus are clearly due to the benign influence of Buddha's precepts.'

It is not possible in the course of this short article to enter into any detail regarding the life of the Blessed One. But I would like to indicate a few of the outstanding events of his long career and ministrations. Born of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya of the Sakya clan, in the city of Kapilavasthu, we find young Siddhartha spending the early years of his life in his father's palace in the customary fashion of the princes of those days. But there was something in him even then which made him the beloved of the people; for with the valour of the Kshatriya he combined true gentleness and humility of spirit. The father had great hopes of his son; for had not the astrologers told him that prince Siddhartha would become an emperor of the whole world? But an emperor he became, not like Alexander or Napoleon, but a *Svarat*--a master of his passions and of himself first, and then a ruler of the hearts of men. And in this transformation is contained much of

⁴ Quoted by Sir E. Denison Ross in his introduction to the same; p. XVII.

the romance of the life of the Buddha.

Gautama was married to princess Yasodhara and to them was born the young prince, Rahula. King Sudhodana took every means to make the life of his son gay and happy; but the great future whispered to the young prince his mission in life and the stark reality of life presented before him the painful scenes of suffering, sickness, and death and the joyous visions of Renunciation and Enlightenment. With a resolution possible only for a true Kshatriya, Prince Siddhartha left the securities and luxuries of his home and palace and wandered forth into the wide world in quest of the Highest Truth and the Peace that passeth understanding. For many years he struggled and searched: now following this sect, now that, wandering from place to place, until at last he came to Gaya; and, finding the place beautiful and serene, he sat down under a Bo-tree resolving not to move till the Highest Truth was found. 'Let my body wither away in this seat, let it be reduced to mere skin, flesh, and bones, but I shall not move an inch from hence till the Highest Enlightenment is gained.' Sitting cross-legged in meditation under the sacred tree, Gautama's mind rose to the heights of contemplation and of ecstasy, and with the passing of every successive watch of the night, fold after fold of the garment of Truth was unveiled till the dawn found the naked Truth revealed.

. . . The spirit of our Lord
Lay potent upon man and bird and
beast,

Even while he mused under the Bodhi-Tree,

Glorified with the conquest gained for all,

And lightened by a light greater than day's.⁵

Gautama became Buddha, the Enlightened One. And he rose from his seat with a shout of joy, for he had attained insight into the meaning of Life and Existence.

Many a house of life

Hath held me seeking ever him
who wrought

These prisons of the senses, sorrow-
fraught,

Sore was my ceaseless strife.

But now,

Thou builder of this tabernacle—
thou!

I know thee! Never shalt thou
build again

These walls of pain,

Nor raise the roof-tree of
deceits, nor lay

Fresh rafters on the clay;

Broken thy house is, and the
ridge-pole split!

Delusion fashioned it!

Safe pass I thence Deliverance
to obtain.⁶

Gautama had attained Deliverance and Enlightenment; but now the question arose in his mind whether he was to keep this wisdom to himself or broadcast it so as to redeem the suffering world. After an intense mental struggle, he decided to share the new-found treasure with one and all—*bahujana hitaya; bahujana sukhaya*—for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many—and thus achieved a greater renunciation

⁵ *Light of Asia*, p. 130.

⁶ *Light of Asia*, p. 131.

than the one he had attained by leaving the princely life. With this assurance and resolve he proceeded to the holy city of Benares where he first turned the Wheel of the Law. And for the next forty years, he wandered from place to place, meeting all classes of people, from prince to peasant, wiping the widow's tears and assuaging the orphan's wails, imparting wisdom to all and gathering a large number of disciples and followers. He charged his disciples to

Go forward without a path!

Fearing nothing, caring for nothing,
Wander alone, like the rhinoceros!
Even as the Lion, not trembling
at noises,
Even as the lotus-leaf unstained
by the water,
Do thou wander alone, like the
rhinoceros! ⁷

The words of the Master carried a freshness and a vigour which appealed to the better minds of the day, and his adoption of the language of the people as a vehicle of expression helped in the spread of his thoughts and ideas. His wide heart embraced one and all, the afflicted and the despised. After a long career of benevolent ministration, the Blessed One passed away at Kusinagara in the year 543 B.C.

The Dharma of the Lord continued to spread, thanks to the activities of the Sangha or monastic Order, which is the first monastic organisation in the world. It rescued the national mind from the intellectual confusion of the age by elevating the people morally and spiritually and it ushered in the age of Asoka, which

may be called the brightest period in India's history. The spread of Buddha Dharma under Asoka is one of the most instructive chapters of world history. Asoka's relinquishment of war and all forms of violence as an instrument of State policy is the only example of its kind in all history; and this great example has a deep significance for us today in the context of the war which civilized humanity is waging against each other. Through his numerous edicts inscribed on rocks and pillars, Asoka helped the spread of the Dharma of love, tolerance, and service. He sent out bands of monks to spread the noble Dharma far and near, and for the next thousand years this activity continued to be the main aspect of India's foreign policy. In a special sense, the emperor Asoka was instrumental in making Gautama the Buddha, the Light of Asia. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his *Glimpses of World History*,⁸ quotes the following well-known tribute of H. G. Wells to the memory of Asoka: 'Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graces and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star; from the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine and Charlemagne.'

In concluding his great work on Karmayoga, Swami Vivekananda

⁷ *Dharmapada*, quoted by Sister Nivedita in *The Master as I saw Him*.

⁸ Vol. I, p. 95.

gives the following tribute to the character and personality of Lord Buddha:

'Let me tell you in conclusion a few words about one man who actually carried this teaching of Karmayoga into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice. All the prophets of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action. The prophets of the world, with this single exception, may be divided into two sects, one set holding that they are incarnations of God come down on earth, and the other holding that they are only messengers from God; and both draw their impetus for work from outside, expect reward from outside, however highly spiritual may be the language they use. But Buddha is the only prophet who said: "I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the Soul? Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is." He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy. This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals, and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal Karmayogi, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been

the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-power that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say, "Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from your childhood; but reason it all out, and after you have analysed it, then, if you find that it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it, and help others to live up to it." He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very highest ideal of Karmayoga.'⁹

All through the teachings of the Blessed one there is constant insistence on right conduct based on true understanding. The aim of life is to develop a perfect character. Buddha referred to himself as an example of this attainment which is open to all, and never laid any special claims to divinity or godhood for himself. Religion, according to Buddha, does not consist in performance of rituals or propitiation of deities, but it consists in the struggle to achieve self-possession and peace. In his last discourse addressed to Ananda, just before his passing away, the Buddha summed up his teachings in the following beautiful words:

⁹ Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. I, pp. 115-116.

‘Therefore O Ananda! be ye lamps unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the TRUTH Herein, O mendicants, a brother continues as to the body, so to look upon the body that he remains strenuous, self-possessed, and mindful, having overcome both the hankering and the dejection common in the world. And in the same way as to feelings, moods, ideas, he continues so to look upon each that he remains strenuous, self-possessed, mindful, having overcome both the hankering and the dejection common to the world. And whosoever, Ananda, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, and a refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but holding fast as their refuge to the

Truth, shall look not for refuge to any one besides themselves—it is they, Ananda, among my Bhikkus, who shall reach the very topmost height!—but they must be anxious to learn.’

Let me conclude this short sketch with the following exhortation of the Dharmapada: ‘Wakefulness is the way to immortality; heedlessness is the way to death; those who are wakeful die not, the heedless are already dead. Continuously increasing is the glory of him who is wakeful, who has aroused himself, and is vigilant, who performs blameless deeds, and acts with becoming consideration, who restrains himself and leads a righteous life. Let such a one, rousing himself to wakefulness by the restraint and subjugation of himself, make for himself an island which no flood can engulf.’

THE WAY OF THE DEVOTEE

‘A river increases in volume and velocity during the rainy season. The faith of My devotees who sing My praise daily, increases in this manner. My devotees continue to direct their affection towards Me at all times, in the same manner as the river Ganges continues to pour more and more water into the ocean. They do not worry whether it is day or night. Their highest ambition is to find Me in their heart. Every effort of their body, speech, and mind is to encompass this end. These are the supreme devotees, and they attain My position which secures them the highest Yoga. They burn the unruly armies of passion in the fire of renunciation, and they control their senses with firmness, being themselves unarmed.

The greatest sin is the feeling of duality, and it is the realisation of Me which destroys that sin. Like salt dissolving in water completely, full devotion will turn you into Myself. The bonds will break of themselves. I shall release you from them.’—*Jnaneswari*.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S MESSAGE TO MODERN INDIA

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I BELIEVE the present is the most opportune time for modern India to turn seriously to the life and teachings of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna for an orientation towards a new and a fuller national life. Fortunately for India, her great spiritual luminaries have never been like temples of marble on hill-tops shining in their secluded grandeur. They always came with a message having a challenging vitality for the transformation of human life. In the present article I shall attempt to bring into clear relief a salient aspect of Sri Ramakrishna's message which is particularly relevant to the present-day needs of our country.

The sorest trouble of present-day India is the division and disunion amongst her people in the name of religion. It is but a palpable fact that at the bottom of all the dissension and conflict of current political ideologies is a certain deep-rooted conviction in men's minds that they belong to radically distinct and mutually antagonistic religions—and what is now being stressed—to antagonistic religio-centric cultures. People are labelled 'minorities' and 'majorities' for political purposes after the religions they profess. Strange though it may seem, religion in this 'land of religion' is the principle of division, and the cause of consequent disunion and dissension amongst the people. This has led some people to suggest indifference to, or banishment of, religion as the

condition *sine qua non* of national unity and solidarity. But such an attempt is neither desirable nor is ever capable of succeeding, and this for a two-fold reason. In the first place, religion—howsoever we may find it difficult to define it—is an inexpugnable urge in man and has no chance of being eradicated from the hearts of men. Secondly it is quite natural and inevitable for a man to find in the forms, principles, and practices of his own Faith food for the satisfaction of his religious hunger. It would be impossible—even if it were conducive to national unity or anything of the sort—to extirpate all religions, or to retain any one religion to the exclusion of others, and thereby seek to clear the ground altogether of the bone of contention.

The diversity of faiths, with its variety of external forms and practices is but an inexpugnable necessity in a world where human nature never has been and never can be seemlessly uniform everywhere. How, then, can the war of creeds or the clash of faiths be ended? Is there any acceptable basis of reconciliation? Is there any message of redemption for people divided in the name of religion? Is it justifiable to hold—as it is being held and proclaimed today by certain influential political leaders in our country—that there must of necessity be clash and antagonism between different cultures which have different religions at their

centres? Modern India can profitably turn to Paramahansa Ramakrishna for an answer to these questions.

In this wonderful life Sri Ramakrishna showed the world what religion truly and essentially is and demonstrated an uncontested rationale of the harmony of different religions. All the evils that the world is subjected to in the name of religion result from an ignorance about the true meaning and nature of religion; and if men only understood what religion truly is, the need for religious harmony and tolerance would *eo ipso* be clear to their minds. It is only a right understanding of religion that will put an end to dissension between religion and religion.

What did religion mean to Paramahansa Ramakrishna? To him it meant an intense longing to see God face to face and a ceaseless panting for Him till He did become a FACT of living experience. Is there any religion worth the name without a direct vision of God? An intense longing for the direct vision of God was the very starting-point in the religious life of Sri Ramakrishna. With a lacerated heart he would cry every evening: 'Oh! Mother! This day is also over, and I have not seen Thee!' To all outward appearance he started as a priest of Kali in the temple of Dakshineswar; but did he take the worship of the external image of Kali in the conventional manner to be the be-all and the end-all of his religious life? Did he not, finding his life without God-vision devoid of all value, take up the long sword that was lying in a corner of the temple to make an end of himself? And lo! that very moment the vision

came. He saw the Divine around him in everything and as everything! Thenceforward the rest of his life became one prolonged ecstasy of living communion with the Divine—seeing God! walking with God!! talking with God!! Conventional observances drop off!! Even the sacred thread—inevitable for one of Brahmin birth—is discarded. Why? Let Ramakrishna say: 'It has dropped away of itself like the dried leaf of the palm tree. From a man of true religion and realization, such external marks of distinction fall off by themselves.' External forms and practices are merely catalytic agencies for kindling the Flame of Vision within. Mere external observances and going through a conventional routine without a consuming passion for God-vision is, from the standpoint of true religion, the husk without the grain. Sri Ramakrishna's entire life—panting for God, clasping Him through ecstasy to ecstasy—is a mighty vindication in modern times of this vital truth. He has put the finger on the essential core of religion. Let those who make a fetish of mere outward forms, mere doctrines and dogmas, ceremonials and rituals, know that these do not constitute the essence of religion, but are merely secondary things. Let them *qua* external aids to inner experience (which is the vital thing in religious life) differ as widely as humanity does. As suited to persons with different temperaments, different historical backgrounds and different cultural and social associations, they are all valuable in their own places. But be it remembered that they are not to be taken as the be-all and the

end-all of the religious life properly so called. They are only scaffoldings required to build the edifice of God-realization. *Religion is primarily a practice and a realization and not a theory or a belief.*

Sri Ramakrishna's *practice* of different religions with equal devotion and veneration forms one of the most glorious and unforgettable chapters of human history and a beacon light to the warring religious communities of modern India. Here was a man who was born an orthodox Hindu, who practised all the diverse courses of *sadhana* recognised within the pale of Hinduism—Tantric, Yogic, Bhakti, Vedantic, etc.—and then, not content with all these, embraced 'other religions' also and made them his own. He got himself initiated into Islam; and during the time he was practising the Islamic faith, he lived, moved, ate and dressed like a Mohammedian, forgetting as it were for the time being, all Hindu ways and manners and Hindu modes of worship. He stopped going to the temple and repeated the name of Allah. And he found it proved in his experience that the practice of the Islamic faith could also lead one to a realization of the Divine. Does not this catholicity and high-mindedness of the unlettered Ramakrishna put to shame the 'educated' of modern India who are not wearied of shouting the shibboleth that the Hindu and Islamic religions and cultures are ever irreconcilable, and make it a plea for the territorial vivisection of the Motherland? The same genuine catholicity led Sri Ramakrishna to Christianity also. Let Mons. Romain Rolland relate it: 'Somewhere about

November 1874, a certain Mallik, a Hindu of Calcutta, with a garden near Dakshineswar, read the Bible to him (Ramakrishna). For the first time Ramakrishna met Christ. Shortly afterwards the Word was made Flesh. The life of Jesus secretly pervaded him. One day when he was sitting in the room of a friend, a rich Hindu, he saw on the wall a picture representing the Madonna and the Child. The figures became alive. Then the expected came to pass according to the invariable order of the Spirit; the holy visions came close to him and entered into him so that his whole being was impregnated with them. . . . It covered his entire soul breaking down all barriers. Hindu ideas were swept away. In terror Ramakrishna struggling in the midst of waves cried: "O! Mother, what are you doing? Help me." It was in vain. The tidal wave swept everything before it. The spirit of the Hindu was changed. For several days he was filled with Christian thought and Christian love. He no longer thought of going to the temple. Then one afternoon, in the grove of Dakshineswar, he saw coming towards him a person with beautiful large eyes, a serene regard and a fair skin. Although he did not know who it was, he succumbed to the charm of this unknown guest. He drew near and a voice sang in the depths of Ramakrishna's soul:

"Behold the Christ, who shed his heart's blood for the redemption of the world, who suffered a sea of anguish for love of men. It is He the master Yогin, who is in eternal union with God. It is Jesus, Love

incarnate." (The Life of Sri Ramakrishna, pp. 86-87.) Thus was he able to declare to his disciples: 'I have practised all religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects . . . I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths. You must try all beliefs and traverse all the different ways once. Wherever I look I see men quarrelling in the name of religion—Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmos, Vaishnavas and the rest, but they never reflect that He who is called Krishna is also called Shiva, and bears the name of Primitive Energy, Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names. The tank has several ghats. At one, Hindus draw water in pitchers and call it *jal*; at another Mussalmans draw water in leatheren bottles and call it *pani*; at a third Christians and call it *water*. Can we imagine that the water is not *jal*, but only *pani* or *water*? How ridiculous! The substance is One under different names and everyone is seeking the same Substance; nothing but climate, temperament and name vary. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him! He will surely realize Him.'

The upshot of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings on the question of 'religion' and 'religions' is this: Religion does not consist merely in going through an external and a formal routine but

in establishing a living communion with God. His great disciple Swami Vivekananda only expressed the lesson he learnt at his Master's feet when he said: 'Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming. Aye, my friends, until each one of you has become a Rishi and come face to face with spiritual facts, religious life has not begun for you. Until the super-conscious opens for you, religion is a mere talk, it is nothing but preparation.' Different religions were to Ramakrishna different pathways to God and the followers of different religions wayfarers through different roads to the same City of God. Underlying the local and the temporal in the expressions of the different faiths, there is a universal and pan-human aspiration to reach the Most High which is the essential core of all religion whatsoever. The adherents of different faiths, are not, on that account, different species of human beings entitled to different rights and privileges in the State but form a single fraternity in their common search for God. Here in this sun-lit verdant soil of India have met the followers of all the faiths in the world. It is but in the fitness of things that the prophet of the harmony of religions should have been born here. But what a sad irony! Where else in the world do you find more ridiculous bickerings in the name of religion? We can only pray God and hope for better things to come.

JAVANESE CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

By Prof. F. Vreede

'If philosophy of religion is to become scientific, it must become experimental and found itself on religious experience.'

S. RADHAKRISHNAN.

I

METHODS OF APPROACH

By reason of the affinity existing between the Indian and the Indonesian mind, the principal pre-requisites of a comparative study may be described in a condensed, critical form, sufficiently explicit for all persons who have experience, or at least comprehension, of spiritual practice, without which it is impossible to understand the living culture of Java.

First of all it is indispensable to bring an open mind to the observation of all manifestations of the Javanese civilization. The routine-work of the Universities, in Europe as well as in India, has today developed into such an intricate co-operation of specialized activities, that personal study has to start with a determined effort to get rid of innumerable prejudices, due to previous one-sided scientific instruction.

As a propaedeutic training, preliminary to independent research work, a. rigorous discrimination must be exercised between facts on the one hand, and on the other their interpretation by theories and working-hypotheses of all kinds.

In fact, the present state of anthropology, philosophy of religion, and other connected sciences does not yet allow a reliable survey, however succinct, of the Javanese civilization;

for instance: numerous studies, published on the iconographical, mythical, and ethnological aspects of the Javanese cultural tradition, although very interesting indeed and stimulating for scholars, are the more dangerous for research students, since they make use of anthropological and other concepts, such as tribal moieties etc., suggesting parallels with so-called 'primitive' peoples, which do not explain the actual working of the Javanese mind.

A wide gap exists between those Javanese who have been educated on Western lines and those who have been brought up in traditional surroundings. The former as a rule no longer understand the inner foundation of Javanese society; the latter do not yet understand the value of modern science in its highest achievements.

Fortunately, however, it is today possible to find highly cultured Javanese, who combine perfect knowledge of the modern view of life with real comprehension of their ancestral symbolism; who are therefore capable of placing its extensive resources at the disposal of persons who wish to study their culture without prejudices of any kind, racial, national, religious, or scientific.

According to the Javanese, culture and civilization cannot be defined otherwise than as the individual and social expression of That which is beyond all expression. We shall therefore not venture to give a personal definition of 'culture' as distinguished from 'civilization', but

use both terms as denoting together two inseparable aspects of the Javanese tradition, each term keeping its usual, particular nuance.

Our remarks will be limited to the present state of Javanese civilization, because its historical evolution has been so far a matter of highly conjectural speculation. Different hypotheses have been proposed implying either interruption or continuity between the ancient Javanese civilizations of Central and of East Java; and again between either of these Hinduistic cultures and the more recent Islamic culture of Central Java. We shall not examine the conflicting theories, but refer only to a few indubitably historical facts, agreed upon by all disputing parties, which are connected with the present characteristics of Javanese culture, as for instance the intermingling of Hindu and Islamic with ancestral and 'Indonesian' features. As the purpose of these notes is neither historical, nor anthropological, it will be sufficiently clear if we use the general term 'Indonesians' for the inhabitants of the islands constituting the Netherlands East Indies, with the exception of the Papuans of New Guinea and a few tribes in the interior of some of the islands.

When we speak of Javanese culture, the field of research must be circumscribed very carefully: Roughly speaking, Java is inhabited by three peoples, each having a distinct language and culture of its own; the Sundanese in the Western part, the Madurese in the Eastern part and the Javanese in the Eastern and Central part of the island. In the latter part with its Javanese popu-

lation conditions of life are however different in the territories directly administered by the Central Government of the Netherlands East Indies on the one hand, and on the other in the four Principalities of Surakarta (Solo) and Ngayogyakarta (Jogja). The following notes will refer to these four principalities as to a cultural whole, but, although they are especially devoted to this central area of living Javanese culture, they provide nevertheless an eventual starting point for investigation of other areas of Javanese and Indonesian culture, in and outside Java.

II

INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION

The influence of Indian culture on Javanese civilization is indeed perceptible in almost every branch of art and knowledge and in every walk of life.

The ruins and remains of ancient Hindu-Javanese architecture and literature are no more than petrified traces of the historical mingling of Indian and Indonesian culture, but the persistent effect of this harmonious marriage of cultures is manifest in the present way of living of the Javanese people.

A historical description of this cultural fusion would be incomplete and misleading, for its main aspect is spiritual, as is clearly indicated by the symbolical testimony of the ancient documents and by the evidence of the present Javanese civilization. 1

In fact, the Javanese do not consider their civilization to be a mixture of cultures, but rather an autochthonous, ancestral tradition, adapting

itself to successive waves of foreign influences: Hindu, Islamic, and Western.

As for Western influence, the historical documents relate in detail by what number and kind of people it has been successively represented at different times; they show that it has been so far mainly of a material and intellectual nature.

As for Hindu and Islamic influences, we do not know exactly when and how the respective cultures were introduced into Java, but the legendary evidence indicates that these influences were predominantly spiritual and depended more on the quality than on the number of those who represented the culture in question.

How then did the Hindu-Javanese fusion of culture take place?

A traditional civilization, like that of the Hindus, implies a living consciousness of a universal nature, which permeates all activities and unifies racial or individual differences; these differences are virtually more extensive than is usually realized; their unification by a common spiritual culture is, however, much profounder than is generally assumed.

Neither the Hindus who came to Java from different parts of India, nor the Javanese are a pure race. Although the modern science of anthropology has not yet succeeded in determining the mental and bodily features of different 'races', *i.e.*, of fundamental varieties of mankind, the so-called Javanese race is generally considered a very composite one; in any case, the Javanese are bound together by their traditional

culture more strongly than by anything else, so that their unity is not at all racial in the modern sense, but rather cultural and traditional, as is in its own way the unity of the Hindus.

At the time of their first meeting, the cultural outlook and practices of the Hindus and the Javanese must have been very different from each other, since not only the anthropological, but the historical and geographical conditions of both civilizations were different. The mental and social diversity of the Hindu and the Javanese communities could not, however, be a cause of disagreement between them, when on both sides the leading personalities possessed a spiritual outlook, broad enough to embrace the mental horizon of the foreign culture, for spiritually the distinction between foreign and autochthonous is less important than their common basis.

For the Hindus this broad outlook on foreign culture is guaranteed by the universality of their own tradition, manifesting itself in the concordance of their widely differing scriptures: Vedas and Upanishads, Puranas, Tantras . . . ; in the harmony of their manifold forms of worship: Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta . . . ; and in the convergence of their various sadhanas: Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana.

As for the Javanese, their broad-mindedness appears to be an ancestral trait, which they share with some other Indonesian peoples, characterized by a genuine freedom from every kind of fanaticism, and a general tradition of mental and social hospitality.

The affinity between Hindus and Javanese thus naturally brought about cultural exchanges and finally a harmonious fusion, of which the magnificent Hindu-Javanese ruins constitute the most palpable evidence.

The racial identity of those who personified this 'Hindu-Javanese' culture is unknown. We do not know whether the authors of the monuments and documents were Javanised Hindus or Hinduised Javanese, or perhaps Hindu-Javanese of mixed blood, or even included all these categories.

Modern archaeology and philology generally interpret the evolution of the Hindu-Javanese civilization as a progressive Javanisation, as a result of decreasing Hindu influence, due to the gradual cessation of direct relations with India.

It is indeed the fact that the features of the latter architectural, sculptural, and literary manifestations of Hindu-Javanese culture resemble less the ancient Hindu styles and approach more and more the style of the present Javanese civilization.

Technical analysis, however, should not only take into account the proportion of the respective Hindu and Javanese elements, but also the fact of their symbolic equivalence or complementarism, which alone explains their simultaneous use. The essence of Javanese culture is not peculiarly bound up with any particular style, neither of the present, nor of the past. Those Javanese who from the beginning of Hindu colonisation welcomed the then foreign culture, were not less Javanese than their ancestors or than their own successors, who continued the work of

adaptation to the requirements of other times, places, and conditions.

The present civilization of the Javanese proves unquestionably that, whatever may have been the racial constitution of their ancestors, the most diverse manifestations of the mighty Hindu culture, philosophy as well as architecture, music and dance as well as social institutions, have been received and assimilated in a strikingly original way. To their cultural invaders the Javanese have procured the greatest satisfaction, which a disciple can give to his master, namely to become the master's equal in fact, as he already was potentially.

Indians, who know Java only from books or by hearsay as a colony of so-called 'Greater India', generally underestimate the originality of the Javanese civilization; those however who are really conversant with the spirit of Javanese culture, understand why Indian culture abroad has met with the greatest response in Java.

The evolution of the Javanese civilization shows, together with an apparent withdrawal and gradual estrangement from purely Indian prototypes, a persistency of their spiritual elements (kebatinan); India's contribution to Javanese civilization can therefore be determined only by learning the language of its traditional symbolism.

To understand this multifarious symbolic expression, special precautions should be taken by Indians, because so many symbols of Indian origin have followed a quite different course of evolution in Java.

Nominal identity does not necessarily cover identity of conception;

the Javanese ideal of spiritual chivalry (*satrya*) is not quite the same as the Hindu conception of Kshatriya.

Similarity of material features does not always imply similarity of realization; the South Indian shadow-play with its puppets cut out of leather, casting their shadows on a white screen and representing scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, has these features in common with the Javanese shadow-play, which is nevertheless quite different in its peculiar atmosphere and setting.

The character of the Javanese Bhima and Arjuna is not quite that of the corresponding Hindu figures; nor would it be accurate to oppose them to each other as animistic characters to more spiritual figures. Book-knowledge is mainly responsible for such superficial identification or opposition of Indian and Javanese symbolic expression.

Two years of comparative studies throughout India enabled us to discover in this country numerous cultural features, which persons, knowing Java but not India, commonly believe to be specifically Javanese. This comparative study has further led us to the following conclusions: For every branch of Java's traditional culture, art, knowledge, and social life parallels are to be found in some part of Eastern, Western, Southern, or Northern India; in most of these cases of parallelism the mental atmosphere is wholly different, but the spiritual background is identical.

India's influence on Java should not be viewed merely as an expansion

of Hindu culture; Islam also seems to have come to Java principally through India and is today a powerful current of the living culture, more apparent even than the deep Hindu-Javanese current, which is hardly distinguishable from the original ancestral tradition.

Strengthened permanently by the mighty waters of perennial Hindu tradition, which carry inexhaustible treasures of cultural expression in all domains of human activity, vivified by the waves of Islamic revelation, which derive their inspiration from highly spiritual leaders, the legendary 'Walis of Java', and stimulated by the breeze of Western thought and action, the even flow of Javanese civilization maintains its own course and orientation towards the Ocean of Universal human culture.

III

ANIMISM AND MAGIC

Comparative study of Hindu civilization in India and Bali, and of Islamic civilization in countries as different as Morocco, Egypt, India, and Java, shows clearly the universal connection between higher and lower elements of one and the same cultural tradition, between its spirituality and its psycho-physical manifestations.

The Javanese civilization is popularly qualified as 'animistic', 'magico-religious', or by other would-be scientific terms. The meaning of the terms 'animism' and 'magic' has been extended nowadays in such various and even opposite directions, that their only common features seem to be a vague designation of the nature of supernatural, mysterious powers of forces.

The above-mentioned qualifications of Javanese civilization prove that its spirituality is generally lost sight of, and that the nature of its social practices is misunderstood. Moreover they present a travesty of authentic Javanese conceptions and a caricature of a highly civilized people. Indian scholars should be aware that these qualifications are not the result of firsthand knowledge or experience, but rather of widespread prejudices against certain characteristic features of Indonesian as well as of Indian and Islamic culture, which occupy indeed in the Centre of Java an extensive although subordinate place.

The original meaning of 'animistic' is 'psychic'; derived from two synonymous terms, the one Greek, the other Latin, both words symbolize the breath as the subtle principle of life, or as the vital function in its relation to the living body.

Like the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Javanese do not attribute human souls to non-human beings, but consider that all things of our earthly world have subtler aspects, corresponding to the psychic characteristics of man; corresponding, i.e., analogous, not similar nor identical.

As our outward actions and reactions are not really separable from our thoughts, feelings, and impulses, that inspire or accompany them, the 'inner', subtle features of all things existing in the so-called 'outer world' may also analogically be called 'psychical'. This view is cosmic rather than anthropomorphic.

The conception of a world uniquely 'physical' without its psychical

counterpart, as an exterior without interior, as an appearance without underlying reality, seems a contradiction or an absurdity; for the conception of things exclusively 'material' cannot be seriously maintained, since it is not possible to give any precise significance to such terms as 'matter', as is illustrated by the very evolution of modern physics.

On the one hand, the body is considered the shell, the container of the 'soul'; on the other hand, the body, being more limited than the soul, is contained in it. In other words, the soul lives in every part of the body, and at the same time 'outside', since it cannot be limited by the body. Of course, this localization of an 'immaterial' soul 'inside' and 'outside' a 'material' body suggests by its symbolical contradiction the simultaneous distinction and inseparability of 'body' and 'soul', of man and his psycho-physical environment.

Moreover, according to the Javanese tradition, things cannot be strictly 'inanimate', i.e., 'lifeless', when 'life' in its different manifestations of movement or of change in its widest meaning, is an essential condition of all corporeal existence.

It has been said by eminent anthropologists that 'animism' is a confusion between the animate and the inanimate, but nobody has been able so far to define in a satisfactory manner the distinction between 'living' and 'non-living', between 'animate' and 'inanimate' 'things'; modern biology tends even to consider as differences in degree, form or modality what Western science in the nineteenth century still envisaged to be clear-cut differences of Nature, as

for instance the distinction between the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

The 'animistic' view of life of the Javanese is based on psychic experience; its results therefore cannot be either confirmed or weakened by physical experiments; its principles, which are symbolical formulations of inner facts, cannot be verified by the theories of modern science; it is impossible to translate them into analytical language, as these principles are suggestions about realities, which cannot be defined, nor rationally explained.

Javanese 'explanations' are symbolical and understandable only for those who have undergone the same experiences and consequently are able to recognize and appreciate their expression. When we compare this traditional education and its symbolic language with the modern scientific instruction and its conventional language, we do not feel entitled to consider the Javanese 'animistic' view of life to be a 'childish' one.

In a way, as to this animistic view of life, the Javanese people might be said to be superstitious, in as much as only the most enlightened among them realize its full implications, while the bulk of the people have only a vague notion and experience of its reality, mixed with a blind belief in the efficacy of ancestral practices, of which they do not really understand the *raison d'être*.

In almost the same way, however, the European masses might be called equally superstitious, as regards their materialistic view of life, nourished by a blind belief in the absolute truth

of the theories, methods, and results of modern science, taught in primary and secondary education without a real understanding of the essence of modern scientific thought, which does not propose theories as permanent certitudes, but as temporary working-hypotheses.

This much discussed problem of animism is for the traditionally educated Javanese no problem at all, since they are not duped, nor puzzled by its symbolism. They fully understand that the conception of a 'physical' world surrounding us is not a result of our immediate experience, but of a mental abstraction, which prevents us from noticing the simultaneously occurring subtler impressions; that the distinction of a physical and a psychical world means no more than the indication of two inseparable aspects of the same reality; and that the psycho-physical environment of an individual symbolizes only one aspect of a whole of which he himself represents the other aspect. It is important to keep this in mind if we are to understand the nature and practice of magic in Java.

'The essence of magical science, constituted by invisible entities, is only an ointment; it does not penetrate into the flesh but adheres simply to the skin.'

MANGKU NAGORO IV.

Magic is a mysterious procedure for those persons who are not accustomed to witness its practices, just as the telephone and radio appear fantastic phenomena to primitive people who are not acquainted with these conveniences of modern life.

There are many degrees of knowledge and practice in magic as in electrical theory and technique. As the science of the savant and its general applications condition the technical knowledge of the electrician who installs the apparatus in a house, and the routine of the average man, who switches an electric light off and on, just so in magic the purely spiritual knowledge of its nature and modalities implies the technical knowledge of the magician and his conscious production of phenomena as well as the routine of the vulgar sorcerer, who is only familiar with the crude manipulations of witchcraft. Just as the explanations of electric phenomena, given respectively by the scientist, the technician, and the average man, may all be different, likewise, the explanations of magic phenomena vary with the degree of knowledge of the magician, and of course with the degree of understanding of the interlocutor.

We shall not deal in detail with the different kinds of magic, distinguished by anthropologists as 'contagious', 'sympathetic', or 'imitative' magic, etc., of which the number might be endlessly increased. These varieties are mostly concerned with material results and constitute the lowest degree of knowledge and practice, in an often very degenerated condition, as a survival separated from its higher levels.

We shall only try to give a general idea of the Javanese conception of magical science (*nglmu karang*).

Magic is an experimental knowledge, based on the relation of the psychical with the physical world. As an experience, it is as immediate

and undeniable as the experience which our senses give us of the 'visible' world (domain of the *nglmu katon*). As a branch of knowledge, it translates the data of this experience into symbolical rules for remembering its conditions.

Magic could be called an art as well as a science, having an experimental as well as a theoretical aspect; it is, however, quite different from modern physics, of which the theoretical part is throughout hypothetical and therefore constantly changing, while the theoretical formulation of magic is throughout symbolical, and, in the same way as rules of artistic expression, intimately interwoven with its practice, which is fulfilled with different purposes.

These purposes differ with the degree of spirituality of the magician, conditioning his outlook on the world wherein we live. So long as he has not entirely overcome the illusion of a 'material' world and of separate individual beings and things, he will use his technique in a 'material' way, *i.e.*, in order to obtain tangible results, as the production of 'physical' phenomena in a 'non-physical' way, etc., because his mind, which sets up itself such oppositions, tries to bridge them without realizing their unreality. This knowledge is thus incomplete and thereby dangerous, as is symbolized by the well-known story of the apprentice-sorcerer, who having only learnt to evoke certain forces or powers, could neither master, nor dismiss them.

The same story symbolizes the extensive danger of such, theoretically incomplete, magical practice, including disequilibrium, insanity, and

finally disintegration of man's mental unity, *i.e.*, psychical death. This danger exists only in the lower regions of magical knowledge and practice, *i.e.*, so long as the above-mentioned illusion of separateness, and the possibility of confusion between the two different levels, the physical and the psychical, subsists.

We need not describe at length the different kinds of magic, as they are practised in the Centre of Java, since for our purpose only the determination of its traditional place within the Javanese culture is important.

As magic occupies an intermediate position between pure spirituality and attachment to the physical world, it covers a wide range of various modalities, symbolized by two main tendencies, popularly distinguished as good and bad, or as magic of the right and of the left, or again as white and black magic.

For the Javanese these two varieties signify the use or misuse of the same practices for good or evil purposes. Good is all that unites, unifies and finally transcends even unity; evil is all that divides, separates and finally destroys. White and black magic in this connection might be represented as centripetal and centrifugal forces in relation to a Centre symbolizing pure Spirituality.

White magic therefore is said to be the servant of God, Whom it seeks to join, while black magic is called the servant of Satan, because it tries to fly away from the Divine Presence.

By the understanding of its two-fold nature, the intermediate position of magic 'between Heaven and Hell' is clearly stated: the same practices,

according to their 'intention', may enlighten or obscure the mind, elevate or debase the soul, *i.e.*, 'spiritualize' or 'materialize' the psychic faculties.

If we limit our interest to such special practices as sorcery and witchcraft, we become blind and deaf to the other, higher features of magical art and science; it is as when we are too much interested in the physical beauty of the Javanese dancers, and thereby become blind and deaf to the inwardness of the dance itself and its music.

It would be futile to define Javanese views according to modern Western conceptions and to ask for instance: 'How do the Javanese distinguish the magical from the physical world? or magic from religion?' As we have seen, the Javanese do distinguish different domains of experience, visible and invisible, but they never forget that all such distinctions are only aspects of one indefinable Reality. All activity, physical, intellectual or magical, performed for the sake of pleasure, curiosity or power, therefore keeps us away from our Real Self and is 'only an ointment' which 'adheres simply to the skin.' But all human activity, magical as well as intellectual and physical, which is not performed for its own sake, but in accordance with the Divine Will, *i.e.*, with our Real Self, 'does penetrate into the flesh.'

IV

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Amazing for Indian scholars is the fact that as a rule the Javanese do not know Sanskrit, nor even the 'Kawi', full of Javanized Sanskrit terms, of the ancient literary texts.

Most Javanese are not interested in the language of these texts, which whenever it had become obsolete in too great a degree, was adapted and interpreted according to a new style of expression; these adaptations, which everybody knows, loves and venerates, have remained extremely popular in all classes of society, while the degree of culture is not measured by the extent of one's readings, but by the degree of comprehension of the ancient popular themes.

Comprehension may be shown in many ways: a most common process of interpretation is that which discovers affinity between words and parts of words, which philologically may be without any special relations. This art of spiritual semasiology is quite different from the modern science of semantics, which deals with linguistic etymology.

The fact that very often for one single term several interpretations are given, based on different relations of affinity, shows that the traditional art does not pretend to give a scientific explanation, although in some cases traditional and scientific interpretation may coincide; the traditional art is perfectly conscious of its difference from the laws of etymological derivation or of phonetic evolution, of which it recognizes the validity in their linguistic domain; its own purpose is to provide a support for meditation in the verbal symbolism, inherent in a traditional language at any stage of its evolution.

This traditional art of interpretation might be compared with the science of letters (*ilmulhuruf*).

inherent in the Arabic language of Islamic tradition, or even more with the hermeneutical science of the ancient Greeks, of which the Cratylos of Plato gives some characteristic illustrations.

This Javanese art of language, which by apparently linguistic methods leads to That which is beyond all language, could also be compared with the Hindu 'nirukta', which also guides us to That which is beyond all interpretations, 'anirukta'.

Besides this art of interpretation there are many other ways of using the language for spiritual transmission or communication: one of them is the widespread practice of proposing or exchanging paradoxes, which have always a symbolic meaning and provide an excellent test for checking one's capacity of comprehension; if the hearer does not really understand the bearing of the paradox, his answer will show erudition instead of wisdom.

The most powerful means of communication is, however, silence, which may be symbolized by absence of sound as well as by sound itself.

This art of silence in writing and speaking, suggesting sometimes what is most important by its very absence, is at all degrees and for all purposes, from the most material to the most highly spiritual, practised with a real mastery by the Javanese of the Principalities of Central Java.

There does not exist a separate domain of literary art as such, nor even of art in general in the modern sense, for which the traditional language does not possess a separate adequate term.

The Western distinction of literary 'genres' would be quite artificial. The 'lakons' of the shadow-play are neither dramas, nor comedies nor tragedies; nor could the performances be said to be 'theatrical', if we are to preserve any precise meaning for this term. For the same reason, the 'tuturs' and 'primboms', containing spiritual teachings and symbolical speculations, could not be termed 'mystic' literature'. The 'babads', using legendary and historical motifs, are not 'historical' or 'legendary' in the ordinary Western sense.

Distinctions between an ancient, a middle, and a modern age of literature, and chronological classifications based on the language, would be not less arbitrary; they are disputable and, moreover, superficial, since the only clue to the understanding of the evolution of Javanese literature is its symbolism.

Literary culture finds its expression as much in oral tradition as in the written documents. A history of Javanese culture, based exclusively on the latter, would be necessarily incomplete: the villages, with their unwritten folk-songs, games and plays, are an integral part of Javanese civilization as much as the princely courts with their elaborate, stylized recitals and performances. The shadow-play, with its written scenario and freedom of personal variation, participates in both characters, being familiar to the peasantry as well as to the nobility, and is everywhere performed with the same simplicity.

The above-mentioned Islamic primboms, continuing the Hinduistic tuturs, and representing at least as

much the rural as the courtly culture, are with the suluk-literature, the lakons of the shadow-play and the babads as many manifestations of the spiritual unity of all Javanese.

The question whether the courts or the villages have contributed more valuable elements to the evolution of Javanese civilization is historically unanswerable, and culturally unimportant, as both spheres, the rustic and the urbane, are essential and complementary; they are interpenetrating parts of the whole Javanese culture, which expresses itself in the tillage of the soil as well as in mental activity, in the oral tradition as well as in the written documents.

V

SOCIAL LIFE

Individual and social life are inseparable from the universal life of the cosmos, because man and his environment in the widest sense constitute a unity. This is the Javanese view of life, underlying the whole social order, including economics.

The ordinary human life is but a short passage on earth; the products of the soil as all other possessions, clothes, habitations, and the soil itself, are considered to be entrusted to man, but not belonging to him as his own property; they must be used only as far as they are needed for maintaining a very simple life, for the most important thing is not the increase of the social income, but the increase of social happiness, inseparable from spiritual attainments.

Expressing this traditional conception, a leading Javanese noble said about two years ago in a public address:

'All social actions must be directed towards the essential, inner happiness of everyone (*karahayon*)' *i.e.*, the spiritual, not the material, welfare is socially the most important point.

Although, due to external and internal causes, Javanese social life has in several aspects fallen short of the traditional ideal, this ideal is always alive in the hearts of the villagers and inspires their general behaviour. This was, at about the same time, officially recognized by the then Dutch Governor of East Java, in the following words pronounced at the installation of a 'Regent' (Javanese high official):

'Listening without any prepossession, but with great attention to that which lives among the population, you will be surprised to discover great treasures of wisdom, experience and energy in the village.'

A talk with simple folk—whatever may be the starting point: the season, the harvest, or the taxes to be paid—inevitably leads through considerations of a moral order to speculations about the 'beyond', and shows that in the village a spiritual outlook co-exists with material poverty, communal solidarity, and co-operation, and with respect for the ancestral heritage, maintained by the elders.

The relative autonomy of the village in its own sphere, the healthy equilibrium of its needs and desires, the consciousness of individual and collective duties towards the Unseen, all the traditional features give to these tillers of the soil the necessary strength at sunset, after a strenuous day's work under the tropical sun, to attend till dawn the nightly performance of the shadow-play, image

and interpreter of the invisible realities.

This moral stability of the Javanese village has so far successfully withstood powerful influences from outside, which have partially undermined its economic, but not yet its social equilibrium: material goods are always considered to be inseparable from the spiritual purpose of life, and a separate 'economical sphere' an incomprehensible monstrosity.

The indigenous society is nevertheless gradually differentiating itself more and more in a modern sense: intellectual, commercial, and labouring classes are coming up, leading a separate existence outside the traditional sphere of the village. This sphere is, however, not necessarily opposed to any intellectual, economical, or industrial activity as such, but only incompatible with mental conceptions, tending to misuse these activities for selfish purpose and interests, and to break up the social solidarity.

A slight amelioration may be stated during the past few years as the first result of a slowly spreading system of modern education, contributing to awaken gradually village life from its actual static equilibrium, to its pristine energy, based on its fundamental spirituality.

VI

SPIRITUAL CHIVALRY

All human activity implies effort, strife, struggle. A latent conflict exists between the good and evil tendencies, between the benignant and the malignant, the righteous and the sinister forces, personified by the puppets of the Javanese shadow-play,

ranged symbolically to the right and to the left of the screen.

This conflict is a permanent, equilibrating feature of universal life. For the very existence of the cosmos it is essential that the good and evil tendencies be equally strong in their material manifestation. But the good forces, however temporarily dispersed, tend constantly towards unity and sympathy; the wicked forces, however temporarily confederated, tend inevitably towards separateness and hatred.

Therefore the righteous tendencies are always sustained by the superior force of divine unity, which is independant of the struggle, as the puppets of the right, although temporarily affected by the magical weapons of their enemies, are always victorious at the end of the shadow-play. This victory over adversaries, equal in courage, strength, and power, clearly symbolizes the superiority of the spiritual over the material and magical.

Those who do not think themselves to be great, strong, and noble, as do their adversaries; those who do not rely on their own knowledge and other qualities, or on the number and strength of their followers, but only on the Supreme Leader, to Whose decision they are resigned, even if it be defeat, cannot be really defeated; they do not desire victory for themselves, but only the accomplishment of the Divine Will.

The moral conclusion is that man should always behave like a knight and never take unfair advantages, as for instance to usurp the arms of the adversary, an action which would degrade the taker.

Fair competition should be the rule and this chivalrous attitude should be maintained till the very end, whether the struggle be directed against one's own passions and bad tendencies, or against personal adversaries, or against the enemies of the country.

Victory or defeat does not ultimately depend upon armament, knowledge, or astuteness, but on the nature of one's true being, on our real value.

The shadow-play is the school, which—by its simple harmony of gesture, word and music—teaches the whole Javanese nation—nobles, intellectuals, and peasants—the wisdom of spiritual chivalry.

In the symbolic struggle between the puppets of the right and of the left, there is as much of knightly valour on both sides; temporary partial victories are obtained by the strong and numerous forces of the left, proud of their extensive, psychic powers; but these victories prove illusive, for the exclusive reliance upon weapons, *i.e.*, upon inferior, exterior powers, degrades the wearer. Only the spiritual discipline of the knight overcomes this danger of degradation of the soul, and is therefore more important than the professional military training, including the acquisition of offensive or protective magic powers, such as invincibility or invulnerability.

After the long nightly hours of struggle against the dark powers, the shadow-play invariably ends at dawn with the victory of the spiritual knight, who has overcome the temptations of might and power by realizing the truth of the Almighty Power of the Supreme: 'Courage,

extreme audacity, and even the victory over the universe, evaporate by Praise and Glorification'.

The Javanese ideal of spiritual chivalry, common to the people as a whole, is very often designated by the term 'satrya'; it is difficult to say to what extent it is derived from the Indian conception of Kshatriya, influenced by the ideal of Islamic chivalry and connected with the innate mentality of other Indonesian peoples. In fact, this ideal meets with a large, nearly unanimous response, among the nobility, the peasantry, and among the intellectuals and students, educated by Western methods.

It is equally difficult to say to what extent this traditional ideal is actually practised in daily life.

The prestige of the nobility is great, not only on account of the illustriousness of lineage, proportional to the proximity of descent from a ruling prince or a spiritual leader, but on account of this ideal of chivalry, of which the nobility is supposed to be a natural embodiment.

The question is, however, a rather complicated one, as Javanese society has been vitiated in many ways; since the military career has been practically closed to the nobility, the tradition of knightly honour and combativeness has been unable to find any natural outlet and seems to inspire various activities, laudable as well as reprehensible from a modern standpoint, such as an exceptional refinement of courtesy and distinction together with an excessive hospitality and acceptance of poverty and debts, the prestige of officialdom and the contempt for material prosperity.

expressed in a well-known poem, including among the four great sins the spirit of commerce, thinking day and night of money, gain and loss.

Whatever may be the present state of mind of the Javanese of Solo and Jogja, the intrinsic power of regeneration, generally invisible to outsiders who pay a short visit to the princely courts, may be discovered among the simple village folk, manifesting itself in favourable circumstances as a chivalrous attitude in the struggle for Life (*urip*), the Real Life.

VII

THE REAL LIFE

'Not that for which you are striving
dominates the world; *That* is invisible,
without form or colour.'

DEWARUCI.

One of the masterpieces of Javanese literature represents the hero Wrkudara (Bhima) on his quest of the 'Pure Water of Life'.

Having been informed by his Guru that it is to be found in the midst of the ocean, Wrkudara, personification of an indomitable will to reach the Goal of Life, plunges without hesitation into the depths of the Unknown.

There he meets Dewaruci, who is like another himself in miniature. As never before Bhima feels impressed before this strange Being, who resembles him more than a brother, more than a double, more than he himself.

When at last Bhima humbly addresses this 'altar-ego' his 'other self', Dewaruci commands him to enter into his (Dewaruci's) left ear: Bhima, after having executed obediently this paradoxical command, finds himself in the very centre of the Universe and loses the perception

of the cardinal points. When at a certain moment Bhima asks whether what he is perceiving is the 'Real Essence of Being', Dewaruci answers that 'That' cannot be obtained by striving for it.

A popular cycle of legendary tales relates the innumerable adventures of Prince Panji, the perfect knight. Throughout the story of this Panji, Prince of the Kingdom of Jenggala there are allusions to a deeper significance, veiled and revealed by the description of his wanderings throughout the world, during which 'Jenggala accompanies him and is never far away'. And the storyteller asks: 'Where is that world, where his wanderings take place? Where is really Panji? For in that tale of Jenggala, it is not a kingdom that is meant. To depart without leaving, where is that to be found?' and the indication is given, that 'Panji is the shadow of the Real Being'.

In a scene of a famous Javanese poem of Islamic inspiration (Centini), the question is discussed whether the performance of the shadow-play with its images of living beings should be permitted in an Islamic country like Java. The answer is given that if the image is not considered to be the symbol of something higher than itself, then indeed the puppets of the shadow-play become idols, which one is not allowed to contemplate.

But there is another way of contemplating the shadow-play, which is explained as follows:

The shadow-play is for the perfect man an image of God's Presence. The shadow-play and its performer, both are symbols of the different ways in which God manifests Himself.

The screen is the visible world; the puppets are the different creatures; the oil-lamp, that throws the moving shadows of the puppets on the screen, is the Lamp of Life.

The creatures of God are innumerable; the eye is arrested by their different forms and shapes, and does not see the True Being. God, manifests his mysteries by symbols; apparently there is a multiplicity of beings, yet there is nothing outside Him.

This is declared to be the exterior aspect of the religious law of the Prophet, and it is suggested that its interior aspect can only be found in one's own Real Self: 'The Performer, the puppets, the music, the screen and the lamp, they are all One.'

The ultimate inspiration of the three works, from which we have taken these three examples, is typically Javanese, although they use themes of very different origins: indigenous, Hindu, and Islamic.

The example of Wrkudara shows that Reality is not something which could be attained by striving for it; yet it is his strenuous effort that has enabled him to obtain this essential teaching from Dewaruci.

Concentration of mind and body, like all Sadhanas, may be a useful, preparatory discipline; it is, however, not essential, since mental and bodily life are only signs and symbols of the Real Life.

The Real Life can neither be the object of our desires, nor the goal of our striving, nor even the result of a pure individual life, for It is beyond the reach of desire, beyond effort and even beyond purity which is an egoistic conception.

We must realize that Real Thought, Real Feeling, Real Will, have no thought, no feeling, no will of their own, but that nevertheless the Real Life cannot be really separate from our ordinary earthly life.

All that we can do is to remain true to ourselves, to be 'dead' in this very life to all that is not essential, and to be aware that nothing, not even corporeal death could put an end to the Real Life, because we can never depart from our real being.

This essential knowledge, which the Javanese call simply 'The Knowledge' (Kawruh), is beyond the illusions of the ordinary, idolatrous knowledge of science, dogma, or scripture; it is beyond all idolatry whatsoever, *i.e.*, not only of the scriptural tradition, but even of the Kawruh itself.

For him who has entered 'The Life' (urip), the cosmic disorder ceases; its essential harmony appears as an image of the Real Being. A universal relationship, symbolized by innumerable analogical correspondances between the human body, the seasons, the cardinal points, the heavenly bodies, colours, sounds, numbers and figures, *i.e.*, between all human and cosmic cycles, represents the manifestation of the Real Life in all diversities of our earthly life, which are only shadows of The Life.

Through an endless variety of symbols, taken from all cultures, with which the Javanese have been in contact, this conception of the Real Life permeates the whole traditional literature, and transfigures in its own manner the symbolism of the Perfect Man (Insanulkamil) and the

metaphysical speculations of Mohyid-din as well as Vedantic, Shaiva-Siddhantic, and many other Indian and Islamic modes of technical expression, familiar to students of Indian and Islamic culture. This synthetic character of Javanese civilization, harmonizing the methods of tasawwuf and Yoga, dhikr and Sadhana, manifests itself in its spiritual practices as in the practice of its traditional dances (golek, klana) and shadow-play (wayang). This synthesis of ancestral, Hindu and Islamic elements should not be mistaken for the manifestation of a mental syncretism, for the interest which the Javanese take in metaphysical speculations, is not one of intellectual curiosity, but of theoretical preparation for spiritual practice. Rationalistic distinctions and definitions of 'monism', 'pantheism', 'immanence', 'transcendence', etc., which have their normal application in exclusively philosophical systems, are therefore of no more value for characterizing Javanese traditional conceptions, than they are for the Vedas and for the Koran, so that there can be no interpretation by rational schemes, unless these be used consciously in a symbolical manner, as for instance by Shankara and Ibnul 'Arabi.

The Real Life of Javanese civilization is not its intellectual conception, nor its cultural expression, but THAT, which expresses Itself in the Javanese culture through the medium of a harmonious symbolism of various origins, and transcends all intellectual and cultural frontiers.¹

¹ The long list of References has been omitted with the author's permission—Ed.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Life Divine, Vol. I: By Sri Aurobindo. Published by the Arya Publishing House, College Street, Calcutta. Pages 441. Price Rs. 6-0-0.

The present work, which brings together the series of articles that Sri Aurobindo had originally contributed to the *Arya*, is a comprehensive exposition of the philosophy of the author. It seeks to be a new presentation of the wisdom enshrined in the Vedanta. As such, a criticism of the older systems of Vedanta, especially of the Mayavada associated with the name of Sri Sankara, occupies an important place in the book. These criticisms, coming as they do from so highly creative a mind as that of Sri Aurobindo, are no doubt very illuminating, but they leave the relevancy of the Maya doctrine in the Vedanta practically untouched. The central problem of all systems of spiritual philosophy, especially of the monistic type, is to explain how the perfection of the Deity is not marred by an imperfect world, which springs from, and subsists in, Him. Whatever its other defects be, the Maya doctrine has the supreme merit of giving a satisfactory answer to this knotty problem. If the world is only an apparent manifestation of Brahman, very real, no doubt, at the level of individual consciousness, but only an appearance in reference to the Brahmic consciousness, the intellect can possibly understand the statement that God is unaffected by the imperfections of the world. For a thing that is only an appearance can have an existence of a kind without affecting the integrity or the real nature of the substratum, of which it is an appearance.

A unity of existence, achieved through the denial of absolute reality to multiplicity is not acceptable to the system advocated in this book. According to it, the Absolute, no doubt, transcends both the One and

the Many, the Changeless and the Changeful. But so long as the Absolute cannot be conceived by the mind, it will be a partial and fallacious reading of It to ignore any of these two aspects in which the mind apprehends It. It is this fallacy that has found expression in one-sided doctrines like asceticism and materialism, the first denying the reality of the Many and the second of the One. Both these one-sided theories have had disastrous consequences on civilization, that of the first being greater than that of the second in many respects. So Sri Aurobindo's system seeks to steer clear of these two, the Scylla and Charybdis of man's mental life, by insisting on the equal reality of both change and changelessness, of both the One and the Many.

While the inherent realism of our mode of thinking is thus satisfied, it is open to question whether this is not achieved by an unnecessary mystification of things. For the system of thought represented herein is monistic, asserting the unity of existence, and unless it be by sanctifying mystification, one's understanding gets simply puzzled as to how the ultimate Reality does not lose its identity in the real multiplicity into which it breaks. To help the mind in overcoming the difficulty, other categories like Truth, Consciousness, Supermind, Overmind, etc. are brought in as intermediary terms between the Absolute and the relative. While they have much mystical value, they do not, unlike the clear analysis of the Mayavada, help in the least in comprehending how the One remains the One in the midst of change. For if these intermediary categories are different from Sachchidananda, Dualism is the inevitable consequence. But that, the system of Sri Aurobindo never claims to be. The only other alternative—and that is the one adopted in this book—is to assert that the

Absolute remains unaffected in spite of real change in It, be it through intermediary terms. One wonders how this is an improvement on Mayavada, as it is claimed to be, unless an intellectually absurd concept must necessarily be an improvement on an intellectually understandable one. For what this doctrine leaves as a mystery, fit to be established only by the power of repetition and sanctification of contradiction, the Mayavada seeks to explain by telling us what 'change' means to the Absolute.

Incidentally it is also relevant to note here, that it is not quite correct to describe Sri Sankara's doctrine as Mayavada, as his critics often do. His doctrine is essentially Brahmanvada. The unity of Existence is its fundamental principle; the relative reality of the world (Jagannithyatva) is only what follows from it. A proper appreciation of this would disarm much of the criticism directed against Sankara.

The system of thought advocated in the present work as also in the other writings of Sri Aurobindo is sometimes spoken of as a new development in Hindu philosophy. This is not, however, quite correct. For it is not much different from that well-known aspect of Hindu philosophy described generally as Bhedabheda or Identity-in-difference, and the type of monistic philosophy advocated by the cult of Shaktism. What is, however, new is the ethical implication drawn out of this doctrine, supplemented by certain extensions of the modern theory of evolution. For example, it is argued that if Matter is only a manifestation of the Spirit, there is no reason why the perfection of the Spirit should not express itself in an increasing measure in life at the physical level. This increasing expression is the meaning and implication of evolution. Evolution has not stopped with the coming of mind and the dawn of our present human consciousness. The next stage in it is the expression of the Supermind at the plane of our

earthly consciousness and the consequent appearance of perfect life on earth. Spiritual aspirants in the past have attained to the Supramental consciousness by passing out of earthly Consciousness. This process, which is described as the ascent to the Spirit, is different from the higher stage of evolution referred to above, and is distinguished from it as the descent of the Spirit into matter.

But one wonders whether a total rejection of the Maya doctrine, which is so intrinsically related to the theory of spiritual monism, is after all necessary to establish the view of life described above. Maya doctrine is in no way opposed to the concept of evolution and the coming of a higher kind of life on earth; it only questions the wisdom of characterizing evolution as a real modification of the Absolute; for that would be equal to saying that the Absolute loses Its perfection—its character as Sachchidananda. The question as to whether evolution has a purpose or not is relevant only within the field of evolution; to carry it into the Absolute will be to take a purely personal view of It, which is tantamount to denial of the Absolute. So the Mayavada merely states, by its doctrine of appearance, how the Absolute is not in the least affected by change while making ample room for evolution and progress in a limited sense within the field of change. This view of evolution and its course have been set forth by Hindu thinkers in their doctrine of Cycles. According to this doctrine evolution is not a movement in an endless straight line towards greater and greater perfection, but a cyclic or wave-like motion with ups and downs, or periods of progress followed by periods of decline. So the coming of a more evolved type of human beings, with higher powers than reason developed in them, is in no way against the Maya doctrine. The darkness of the age of mind may be lighted by the dawn of supramental consciousness. But no worldly perfection is of eternal

duration; for that is impossible in this world of change. So in the wheel of evolution a set back or decline will follow a period of rise or progress. Thus, in the light of the Hindu theory of evolution, even if there is to be an age of supramental consciousness and world transformation, that will not be eternal, nor be the unconditioned perfection of the Spirit.

From the fact that in a monistic philosophy Matter is not different in substance from Spirit, it cannot be argued, as is done in this book, that the perfection of the Spirit can become manifest at the plane of Matter. From the point of view of real transformation, if this occurred, Matter will resolve into Spirit, there being no longer that difference in vibration responsible for the state called Matter. From the view-point of apparent transformation, which is that of Mayavada, the universe of manifestation, though non-different from the Spirit, is of another order of reality, being only a reflection, an indication, of the Supreme Spirit. From both these points of view, therefore, the perfection of the Spirit is gained only when consciousness is free from all limitations, which is but another name for Matter. There is, however, this difference: In the former case this freedom can be attained only with the disappearance of Matter, whereas in the latter case the persistence of Matter does not bar the realization of this freedom at the level of consciousness, provided the Spirit's non-affectedness and one's identity with the Spirit are recognized. It would therefore seem that an ethics based on a doctrine of perfection in life, which is the one that Sri Aurobindo holds, has some sort of sanction only in the light of the monism advocated by Mayavada. Even this is not the perfection of Matter, but the realization of the Spirit's perfection at the level of consciousness. All that we call perfection in Matter is only an imperfect reflection of the Spirit's perfection.

The concept of the supramental is the key to the psychology advocated in Sri Aurobindo's system of thought. The supramental, according to him, is the intermediate link between the individualized mentality of man, with its divided outlook, and the absolute unity of Sachchidananda. The supramental is the Sachchidananda Itself, 'but Sachchidananda not resting in Its pure, infinite invariable consciousness, but proceeding out of this primal poise, or rather upon it as a base and in it as a continent, into a movement which is its form of Energy and instrument of cosmic creation'. It 'is an equal self-extension of Sachchidananda, all-comprehending, all-possessing, all-constituting. But this all is one, not many; there is no individualization . . . All is developed in unity and as one; all is held by this Divine consciousness as forms of its existence, not as in any degree separate existences. Somewhat as the thoughts and images that occur in our mind are not separate existences to us, but forms taken by our consciousness, so are all names and forms to this primary supernmind.'

This linking principle of Supermind is of great practical importance in the system of Sri Aurobindo. For it is pointed out that if there were only the unity of Sachchidananda on the one hand and the divided mentality of our human consciousness on the other, perfection of the Spirit in the physical life would have been impossible. Spirit and the psycho-physical nature of man would be two opposite entities, one of which must be abolished if the other were to be enjoyed. But the Supermind, the link and the transition between the two, assures the possibility of man realizing the one Existence, Consciousness and Delight in the mould of the mind, life and body.

Does not the idea of Divine immanence, common to all systems of Indian thought, including Dualism, give this very assurance which Sri Aurobindo finds in the concept of the Supermind?

The book is full of very original and striking thoughts, which, like the one stated above, shed much light on obscure problems of religion and philosophy. Although we cannot agree with the central metaphysical position adopted in the book—namely, its unmerited hostility to Mayavada—we have no hesitation to state that the work is a first-rate

contribution to modern Indian thought, and it will require the labours and skill of many interpreters to bring out in clear and simple language all the implications of the doctrines set forth in it with an abstruseness, dignity and versatility characteristic of a first-rate creative work on philosophy.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram, Kaladi.

Report for the Year 1941.

Kaladi is famous as the birthplace of Sri Sankaracharya. The Ashram started there in April 1936, on Sankara's birthday has been steadily developing. The above Report gives an account of the many-sided activities of the Ashram.

The Sanskrit School which was started by the Ashram with 3 students has now become a High School sending students for the Sastri examination. Its strength during the reported year was 213. The Sri Sankara Hall which was built as an annexure to the High School building was opened by Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji, the General Secretary of the Mission.

The Gurukul which began with 2 or 3 inmates has now 27 inmates on its roll. During the year the elderly inmates studied Vedanta Sutras, and others the Upanishads, *Yoga Sutras*, *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, and the *Gita*.

The President of the Ashram delivered 102 lectures in the Travancore State during the year. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sankara were celebrated on a grand scale.

The Ashram library has grown considerably and at present contains 1,000 volumes.

The total income of the Centre for the year was Rs. 8,759-9-0 and the expenses Rs. 8,756-10-6. The finance of the Ashram is far from satisfactory and therefore the President appeals for a sum of Rs. 50,000 for the up-keep of the Gurukul as well as for starting a Medical Ward and an Industrial Section, both of which are felt to be essential for the Centre.

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Bhubaneswar

Report for 1939 to 1940.

The Bhubaneswar branch of the Mission was established in 1919 by Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj who wanted it to be a training Centre for the monastic members of the Order.

In addition to the regular worship and celebration of important religious festivals, there were scriptural classes of five different groups one of which was devoted to the study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature and the other for the study of the Six Systems of Indian Philosophy.

The Math has published till now an Oriya translation of the *Words of the Master* by Swami Brahmananda, the *Ramanama Sankirtan* in Oriya script, and the *Sri Ramakrishna Lilamrita* in Oriya verses.

Relief: During the period under report this branch of the Mission engaged itself in fire relief work in the village of Bankual and a sum of

Rs. 250 was spent for constructing the houses of 75 distressed families.

A *Charitable Dispensary* is being maintained by the Mission where both Allopathic and Homoeopathic systems of treatment are being followed. The number of cases treated during the period was 53,884 with an average daily attendance of 73.91. The total receipts of the charitable dispensary for the two years amounted to Rs. 1,090.12.0 and the expenditure came to Rs. 725.14.0.

Educational work was also undertaken by the Math; 40 students were on the roll of the L. P. School which is in existence for the last 8 years. The total receipts and disbursements for the school were Rs. 532.2.9 and Rs. 95.1.3 respectively.

Appeal is made for funds to purchase hospital store for the Dispensary and for completing the School building.

**Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama,
Trivandrum**

Report for August '40 to August '41

This is the combined report of the Ashrama and the two Dispensaries run by it: the Allopathic Dispensary at Sastamangalam and the Ayurvedic Dispensary at Nettayam.

The *Allopathic Dispensary* came under the management of the Ashrama only about an year and a half ago. The total number of patients treated during the year was 13,870, the number of new cases being 4,200 and that of the repeated cases 9,670. Being situated on a fringe of the Trivandrum City the Dispensary was of special use to the people of the adjoining villages. The total receipts including the previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 697.5.0, and the total expenses came to Rs. 536.2.5. The Dispensary owes a great deal to Rao Bahadur Dr. K. Raman Tambi, M.D., whose close association and regular attendance have raised the prestige of the Dispensary and made

expert medical aid available for the poorest of the poor.

The *Ayurvedic Dispensary* has now secured the services of a qualified Ayurvedic physician. The average daily attendance during the closing three months of the period under report was 23. Its expenses were met from the income of the Ashrama.

Activities of the Ashrama: Under the auspices of the Young Hindu Movement, the President of the Ashrama held 30 classes on the general principles of Hinduism and on the *Bhagavadgita*. Besides co-operating with the college students in their religious activities, half a dozen lectures were delivered by the President at various places in the State. A weekly *Bhagavatam* class was also conducted at Sastamangalam. The monthly Malayalam magazine, the *Prabuddha Keralam*, was published regularly. To promote mass education, a Night School for adults and coaching classes for children have been started.

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on a grand scale, and Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Dewan of Travancore, presided over the public meeting.

Besides being a centre of these activities, the Ashrama maintains six monastic members who spend their life in prayer, meditation and study. The six members live in two establishments, one at the Ashrama proper and the other in the town branch at Sastamangalam. The funds for the maintenance of these two establishments and the running of the Dispensary are quite different, that of the former being derived from the pious offerings of a few devotees. The work among the depressed classes, which has been started on a humble scale has to be strengthened by making arrangements for the teaching of village arts and crafts and by giving occasional financial help to deserving cases. The Ayurvedic Dispensary is in urgent need of a better building to house it and an income of its own.

The Allopathic Dispensary which is proving its growing usefulness also stands in need of a greater monthly income to meet the recurring expenses. Among its present requirements are a dressing table, more furniture and up-to-date medical appliances. For all these a sum of at least Rs. 5,000 is necessary, and it is hoped that the generous public will encourage the useful work of the institution by their liberal help.

**The Ramakrishna Mission
Sevashram, Kankhal (Hardwar).**

Report for the Year 1940.

Sevashram: Two miles from Hardwar, and holier still, is Kankhal, the seat of the above relief Centre. There are 50 beds at present, but more accommodation is provided during times of epidemics or during Melas when there is an unusually large number of pilgrims in the city. The total number of indoor patients treated during the year was 1,295 of whom 1,085 were cured, 139 relieved and 44 died; 27 were under treatment at the close of the year. In the outdoor department, there were 29,848 cases, of which 18,341 were repeated and 11,507 new ones. The total receipts for the year came to Rs. 20,426-2-2 and the expenses Rs. 19,007-7-7.

The Primary School: A free primary night school is being maintained since 1913 for the masses, especially for the Depressed classes. During the year under review there were 130 students as against 80 for the last year and of the 130, 88 belonged to the Depressed class community.

The Library which is intended for the benefit of the workers and the local public contains 2,524 books in different languages.

A building for the general ward with accommodation for 25 beds, underground drainage with sanitary arrangements, building and acces-

sories for the laboratory, electric motor pump for the main well, kitchen block with store rooms and dining hall, land and building for the Night School and endowments for 35 beds in the Indoor Hospital seem to be the immediate needs of the institution. The president earnestly appeals for the necessary funds.

**The Ramakrishna Mission,
Narayangunj.**

Report for the Year 1940.

Educational: The Vidyarthi Bhawan (Students' Home) had a total strength of 32. The inmates who have been reading in the local high schools showed satisfactory results in the annual examination. The Vivekananda Social Service League had twenty sittings and boys took part in debates on various subjects.

The Durga Charan Library which is open to the public contains 2,000 volumes including some valuable books on Hindu religion. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and other Saints of the Order were celebrated on a grand scale.

The Outdoor Homocopathic Charitable Dispensary under the guidance of a resident medical officer proved of immense service to the neighbouring villages. During the year the total number of cases was 7,446, of which 3,564 were new cases and 3,882 repeated ones.

The total income for the year was Rs. 11,014-0-9 and the expenditure came to Rs. 10,258-8-6.

The insistent demand for more seats in the Vidyarthi Bhawan calls for land acquisition and more buildings. The minimum cost of land acquisition and construction work has been estimated at Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 30,000 respectively. A gymnasium for the physical culture of the students, a kitchen, a tube well and latrines are the other needs of the institution.

AN APPEAL

Purna Kumbh Mela

Purna Kumbh Mela will be held in Prayag on the Tribeni sands in 1942. The first Snan (holy bathing) will take place on Makar Sankranti, the 13th January and the next Snan on Amabassya, the 16th January; the third on the Basant Panchmi, the 21st January; and the last on 1st February. During this occasion there will be a large concourse of pilgrims for holy Snan. The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram, Allahabad, has decided to open a camp on the Mela grounds, for an outdoor Charitable Dispensary and first aid.

for the purpose of giving medical aid and attention to the assembled pilgrims. Considering the large number of people who will gather on the occasion from all parts of India, we are making a special appeal to the public to contribute liberally so that we may render this medical assistance on this holy occasion. An expenditure of Rs. 1,500 is estimated for the occasion. Any contribution may be sent to

Swami Raghavananda,
Hon. Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,
Muthiganj, Allahabad.

THE PATH OF DEVOTION

'The body is the palace, the temple and the house of God; in it His eternal light dwelleth. In all things is His light; from it He is known, but He is found by love. The true One is found when the mind cometh home.

When man hath love and devotion and is himself lowly, it is then, O Nanak, he obtaineth salvation.

Drunkards abandon not drink, nor fishes water; so God is pleasing beyond all else to those who are imbued with the wine of his love.

Thy name alone is my lamp; suffering the oil in the container. The lamp's light hath dried up the oil, and I have escaped suffering.'—*Guru Nanak*.

The love in the heart of a boy is whole and undivided. When he gets married in time, half of his heart, if not more, is given away to his wife, and when children are born to him, he loses another quarter thereof, while the remaining quarter is divided among father, mother, honour, fame, pride, dress, and the rest; therefore he has no love left to offer to God. Hence if the undivided mind of a boy is directed early enough to God, he may gain His love, and realise Him easily. But it is not quite so easy for grown-up people to do so.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

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SAINT LILASUKA'S PRAYER

सचित्सुखैकरसवस्तुनि यत्र विश्वं भिष्यैव रूप्यमिव राजति शुक्लिभितौ ।
तस्मिन् प्रतीचि परमात्मनि चित्तवृत्तिर् ब्रह्महमस्मि परमित्यनिशं ममात्मु ॥

The essential nature of the Real is existence, intelligence, and bliss. They are not the attributes, but the stuff of It. They form a uniform core like the sweetness of sugar or salinity of salt. The origin, abode, and goal of this imaginable and perceptible universe is that Reality. Those who have no true insight believe that the experienced universe alone is the Real. But in fact the universe shines by the presence of that Divine Reality. The perceived universe is not as real as That. It is only a wrong reading of It, like the brightness of a nacre illusively grasped as a bit of silver. The Real is Brahman—the infinite, the eternal, and the highest. Stripped of all limitations the innermost essence of all beings is that Great Being. Hence I pray: May my thought assume that form and ever be established in it; namely, my highest Self is none other than that great Divine Reality.

VERSE 1, *Daivam.*

THE WAY TO GOD-VISION AND PEACE¹

By Swami Sasyatananda

If we have made any serious effort in the path of spiritual *sadhana* we must have, at one time or other, put to ourselves the anxious question: Why is not God revealing Himself to us? But we scarcely stop to think whether we have made ourselves fit for God-vision. Even Arjuna, the beloved friend and devotee of Sri Krishna, was doubting his own fitness for the vision of God, and we find him asking Bhagawan: 'If thou thinkest it possible for me to see it—Your true form—then show me Thy Eternal Self'. 'What thou hast to see', replies the Lord, 'the human eye cannot grasp, for it can see only the outward appearances of things. There is a divine eye, an inmost seeing, by which the supreme Godhead can be beheld and that eye I give to thee'. We must have that *divya-drishti*, that spiritual insight before we can aspire for the Divine vision. It is no wonder that with *srishti-drishti*, i.e., with worldly outlook or with *bhoga-drishti*, i.e., with our energies and mind diffused over thousand and one things of the world, we fail to get the vision of the Lord.

In North India when Sadhus meet they sometimes exchange greetings with the question, 'Darshan saph hai?'—is your vision clear? clear enough for the vision of the Godhead. Most of us have yet to gain that vision. For the benefit of aspirants Bhagavan Sri Krishna has pointed out the ways and means for gaining such a vision: 'Not by Vedas, not by austerity, nor by gifts,

nor even by sacrifice can I be seen. But by undistracted devotion can I be known and seen in reality.' Those who labour under the delusion that God's vision can be purchased by gifts of money made to the Deity or by humanitarian works or by self-mortification are entirely mistaken. It is not a thing to be had, but a thing we have already; it is a thing eternally attained, which now is unattained as it were. We have to make ourselves aware of our attainment and this necessarily will mean a transformation in our lives brought about by the sublation of our separate personalities, as we imagine ourselves to be, into the calm impersonality of the one eternal Self.

A start towards this transformation is made when we grow into the realization of the import of the lines:

Our wills are ours we know not why,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

Only those who have completely resigned themselves to the hands of the Lord, can pray with genuine sincerity, 'O Lord! Thy will be done.' Such a prayer is a true sign of a complete self-abnegation in the aspirant, which must lead him to an awareness of his real nature, his essential oneness with the Divine.

But then complete self-effacement and its essential corollary of the self's realization of its identity with the All—with the infinite—are things not easy of attainment. Our real nature lies hidden under a morass of

¹The substance of a speech delivered on 12th October, 1941.

ignorance, under *Yogamaya*. We have come to identify ourselves with our unreal nature, with our unreal selves, with our body, mind, intellect, etc., and this identification has been made very sweet to us by the momentary pleasures that are the inevitable results of such an identification. This makes our severance from our unreal self very painful and the realization of the real nature very difficult. By constant meditation on the defective nature of our limited selves, on the phenomenal, on the one hand, and on the perfection and sublimity of the true reality on the other, we have to learn the art of discrimination. True discrimination brings dispassion for mundane things and devotion to the Real, the *summum bonum* of life. For man imprisoned in his mind and body this is indeed difficult. Therefore the Lord teaches: "Be a doer of My works alone, accept Me as the supreme goal, be devoted to Me, become My *bhakta*, be free from attachment and bear no enmity towards any creature; for such a man comes to me." In other words, establishing superiority over the animal nature, feeling the unity with all creatures, becoming one with the Godhead, uniting one's own will with that of the Divine in works, absolute love for one and all in God—this is the way to know and realize Him as He is in reality. The validity of this realization is contained in the truth that the 'I' of Bhagawan is none other than the Totality.

For us activity is unavoidable as long as we are in this body. But by dedicating all our works to the Lord, we are able not only to be free from the evils of action but also to utilize

actions as a stepping-stone to rise to Self-knowledge. We should renounce the fruits of all deeds to the Supreme Source of all activity; nevertheless we must be always active doing those works that are imposed by our nature. By such spiritualized work obstacles diminish and disappear, and the mind will then be free to fix itself in Divine consciousness. This evidently is Sri Krishna's supreme teaching, and if He repeats the same teaching often it is because it is sound and universally acceptable. Such dedicated activity has the power to create all the conditions necessary for God-realization.

The Lord however does not stop with this general prescription of desireless action done in a spirit of dedication for all. All are not of the same spiritual potency and paths differ with types. In order to give Arjuna a choice to select what suits him most, He presents a graduated discipline which may be followed by various *sadhakas* according to their features: 'Fix thy mind on Me only; fix in Me thy *buddhi* (reason) also. Thou shalt no doubt abide in Me as Myself, on the death of this body. If thou art unable to fix thy thought on Me without intermission, then do thou seek to reach Me by constant practice.' Here practice consists in repeatedly withdrawing our thoughts from the objects of the world to which the mind wanders, and trying to fix it again and again on God. Steadfastness of mind is acquired by such practice. The Lord continues, 'If thou art not capable of practising either, then be thou intent on doing actions for My sake. Even by doing actions for My sake thou shalt attain perfection.

For through actions divinely dedicated, thou shalt attain purity of mind which will culminate in *moksha* (perfection). If thou art unable to do even this, then with devotion for Me, do thou abandon the fruits of all actions.' Sri Krishna pursues the point further: *Abhyasa*—constant practice—is great and powerful, but better than that is knowledge, knowledge of the Truth behind changing things. This knowledge too is excelled by a silent, complete concentration on the Truth. But more effective still for a man in bondage is the giving up of the fruit of one's works because that destroys all causes of disturbance and brings and preserves automatically an inner calm and peace, the calm and peace which are the foundation of a perfect and tranquil life.

And when this calm and perfect equipoise is reached we shall come to

have as the core of our lives an extreme solicitude for the welfare of all—for are we not the All? We will seek happiness in others, but for ourselves perfection. Life then for us is for achievement and not for pleasure. To achieve perfection in ourselves and happiness in others we act, treating humanity as an end, never only as a means. The perfect vision which meets the Divine at every moment, in every action and with all the integrality of the Nature becomes ours and the ineffable peace dawns on us never to vanish. We transcend the plane of duality and with that the plane of fear and hate, for, as the Upanishad says fear is born of the sense of duality, and we pass into the realm of peace from whence there is no returning. Let us all learn to labour to bring upon us that Peace, the Peace that passeth all understanding.

Meditation and contemplation should be kept up always.

Throwing away all work, you must meditate upon God in the evening. The thought of God naturally comes to the mind at dusk. Everything was visible a while ago, but ah! now it is all shrouded in darkness. Who has done this? Such thoughts come to the mind. Haven't you marked how the Mohammedans give up all work and sit down to pray in the evening?

As it is very difficult to gather the mustard seeds that escape out of a torn package and are scattered in all directions, so it is not a very easy affair to ingather and concentrate the mind which runs after worldly things in diverse directions.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

Dr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S IDEALS OF HUMAN UNITY

By Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

TAGORE was a true interpreter of the ancient Indian culture. He had a wonderful insight into it. He owed his spiritual awakening to the ancient method of spiritual realization. He had well-reasoned and deep-seated conviction in the reality of spiritual life. He had a correct estimation of spiritual values and of the cultural heritage of India. He had full faith in man's immense potentialities, his endless progress and glorious destiny. He was therefore more interested in the holiness of humanity than in anything else. As a true and uncompromising believer in Indian ideals, he clearly understood the inherent constitution of man who was not made of matter only but had also a soul. The common heritage of the human race is more spiritual than material; man's earthly vesture is perishable, but his essential being is spiritual and hence it is imperishable. That aspect of his being is free from decay and death. It is that which survives and lasts for ever and ever more. This aspect of man's being is generally neglected at the present day. The Indian people who should have known better have allowed themselves to be swept away by western ideals whose dominating feature is materialism. Indian humanity has been dazzled with the achievements of western sciences and has neglected the cultivation of a higher purpose in life. In our zeal for imitating western thought and life we have temporarily lost sight of our own ideals and traditions. Tagore says that no person

should lose his individuality. What holds good in the case of an individual holds good in the case of a nation also. An individual or a nation should not wholly drift away from its ancient moorings.

'In my country' says Tagore, in *Nationalism* (p. 106) 'we have been seeking to find out something common to all races, which will prove their real unity. No nation looking for a mere political or commercial basis of unity will find such a solution sufficient. Men of thought and power will discover the spiritual unity, will realize it and preach it.' Further he says, 'India has never had a real sense of Nationalism. Even though from childhood I had been taught that idolatry of the Nation is almost better than reverence for God and humanity, I believe I have outgrown that teaching, and it is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity.'

The ideal of nationality does not find favour with some of the foremost thinkers of modern Europe. They consider it as the root cause of mutual strife, jealousy, rivalry, dissension, hatred, and war. The ideal of Indian culture is to unite discordant people and not to divide them. Tagore is not the only thinker of our time who has discarded nationalism in favour of internationalism. There are a number of political thinkers such as Sir Norman

Angell, Bertrand Russel, Schiller, Garlon J. H. Hayes, and Bernard Joseph who have condemned the prevailing ideals of separate nationalism and advocated the cause of international goodwill and mutual co-operation.

That there are evils in nationalism has been recognized by numerous critics. Lecky and Lord Acton, both brought up in the traditions of Liberalism and both writing in the third quarter of the Nineteenth Century, were conspicuous apologists for the beneficent civilising influence of an expansive imperial state and fearful of the 'little mindedness' and intolerance which would result from a world broken up into fragmentary national states.

Mr. Sydney Brooks thinks that war—the greatest curse of nationalism—is the result of the union of nationality and patriotism.

May we not have here the most promising means of supplementing nationalism by internationalism, and thus of mitigating nationalism?

So, let us continue to be patriotic citizens of our respective national states. Let us cherish our national language, our national traditions, and our national ideals. Only, let us clearly recognize and frankly acknowledge that there are faults in contemporary nationalism and let us sincerely endeavour to remedy such faults by combining our nationalism with internationalism, by tempering our national loyalty with an honest and reasoned respect for all other nationalities. As the venerable Professor John Watson has strikingly phrased it:

'The feeling of loyalty must be sublimated into a form of patriotism

which combines the most intense love of country with the desire to do justice to other nations.

'I have no conception of the love of country, and it seems to me at best a heroic feeling which I am well content to be without.' So Schiller said: 'I write as a citizen of the world who serves no prince. I lost my fatherland to exchange it for the great world. What is the greatest of nations but a fragment.'

'The true internationalism is concerned with promoting the co-operation of nationalities and not with curbing their self-expression. It has become manifest that the way to overcome the evils of nationality is not to put an end to its existence but gradually to encourage friendly intercourse amongst nationalities, and to prevail upon them to appreciate the advisability of organising themselves on the basis of mutual assistance.'

Nothing human was foreign to Tagore's nature. He had deep sympathies with all human affairs and was equally interested in the welfare of all; he appreciated the best and the lasting elements in every type of civilization. He had a big heart. He sincerely believed in the oneness of humanity and in its common ideals. That is why he was a supporter of international goodwill, harmony and mutual co-operation. He was against war. He repeatedly advised the belligerent nations to discard arms and settle their differences by mutual understanding born of the sense of justice, fairplay and commonweal. Withal, he loved India and the Indian nation and worked for its advancement.

One may reasonably ask as to how these two conflicting ideals of nationalism and internationalism are reconciled in his life and teachings and what is the secret of his success as a humanitarian and a nationalist. The core and kernel of the whole of the ancient Indian thought is the oneness of Life vibrant in every atom, one Divine consciousness pulsating through all living forms. The indwelling self of man is the self of all. There can be no addition to or subtraction from it. It is ever the same. It is by virtue of this common Life shared by all that the sacred scriptures of ancient India have addressed themselves to *sarvabhotani*, all living beings, and have enjoined on us to devote ourselves to *lokasangraha*, the welfare of all living beings. How can one deviate from this glorious ideal in one's political outlook if one has deep and unshakable faith in it. Tagore had implicit faith in India's glorious heritage which he had fully imbibed. He could not help sympathising with all who shared a common human destiny. This is an obvious explanation of his broad and catholic outlook.

It is common knowledge that disinterested service of one man is the service of humanity. It is not physically possible for a man or a group of men to strive for the welfare of the whole of the human race. All that one can do is to have good will for all and serve one's fellow-beings in one's own limited sphere. Every one is born into a family, community or a nation according to the relations and liabilities incurred in past lives. It is man's manifest duty to follow his *svadharma* by virtue of his past

debts and responsibilities. Tagore loved and served India partly for the reason stated above, partly because he honestly believed that Indian culture had a message for mankind which it was the duty of every Indian to convey to the rest of erring humanity. If India was enslaved and continued to be in her degraded condition, her message, however precious would not be listened to with the attention it deserves. He rightly felt that by loving and serving India to the best of his knowledge and capacity he was serving the cause of a common humanity.

His writings are not narrowly national but are touched with a wider spirit. In him the voice of India speaks not only to the Indian but to the world at large. Dr. Sunderland well observes: 'No land in the world has ever produced profounder thinkers on all the problems of religion and life than the India of the past. India of today has no wiser, kinder, more broad-minded or greater teacher than Tagore.'

Rabindranath was endowed with a synthetic vision which saw unity in diversity. He could not tolerate absolute divisions between individual and society, community and nation, and empire and the world. Mystic experience the world over has this philosophy underlying it. 'Rabindranath's religious message is simple. Stick to religion, let religions go.'¹ Happiness is for those who realize this oneness and wholeness of spirit. He sees fundamental unity in diversity, and so his religion appeals to all. It is his hope that the world-religions which have met on the soil

¹ Fruit Gathering, (VII) *Philosophy of Tagore*, p. 177.

of India will cease to conflict with one another, and reach a reconciliation. "Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians will not fight each other on the soil of India; they will here seek and attain to a synthesis. That synthesis will not be un-Hindu, it will be peculiarly Hindu."² For, has not Lord Sri Krishna proclaimed five thousand years ago in clear and unequivocal words?—"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha." (IV: 11).

'There is naught whatsoever higher than I, O Dhananjaya. All this is threaded in Me, as jewels on a string.' (VII: 7).

"I am the Generator of all; all evolves from me; understanding thus, the wise adore me, in rapt devotion."

Tagore sought to build Indian citizenship not on any narrow basis of creed, province or language, but on the broad basis of India's culture and her spiritual vision of universal love. He fervently desired that Indians should work for the regeneration of India because they are all Indians, children of the same soil. The Hindu as well as the Muslim should look upon India to be the home of his noble ancestors; does not her earth contain the dust of his saints, scholars, thinkers and philosophers?

Some educated Indians of the present day are not quite in sympathy with Tagore's ideal of preserving the national identity of India, and feel that India's salvation lies in the imitation of the west. That is not an honourable course of

life to adopt. In their eagerness to save their skins, they forget that it will ultimately be more profitable to save their souls. If the educated classes do not realize it, it is only the sign of how far the disease has gone, and the case is so much the worse. It is impossible to believe, unless one is acquainted with the inspiration of ancient India and sees for oneself, the extent to which modern India has succumbed, body and soul, to the materialist influence. These Indians pride themselves that they are practical. What a price it costs to be practical today! Their soul is the price they pay.³

'Imitation', to quote his own words from *Nationalism*, 'is like dressing our skeleton with another man's skin, giving rise to eternal feuds between the skin and the bones at every moment.'⁴ He has no hesitation in saying: 'If the political salvation of India is to be attained at the expense of her soul; we had better preserve the soul and lose the earthly kingdom.'⁵

If Rabindranath is against the political subjection of India, it is not due to any selfish motive. He is afraid of the western spirit of materialism which is slowly subduing the soul of India and impoverishing her life and spirit.

Preserving the soul of the Indian type, we may adopt whatever is good and noble in the west. Rabindranath demands a synthetic integration of the old and the new, the East and the West. 'It is idle mendicancy to discard our own and beg for the

² *Philosophy of Tagore*, p. 191.

⁴ *Nationalism*, p. 54.

⁵ *Philosophy of Tagore*, p. 192.

foreign,' while at the same time, 'it is the abjectness of poverty to dwarf ourselves by rejecting the foreign,' says he in his interpretation of Indian History. India has preserved her vitality because, whenever she came into contact with alien civilization, she absorbed whatever was great in them without surrendering the fundamentals of her own type.⁶

The East has learnt much from the West; but we must show to the west by our lives and actions that the West too has something to learn from the East which can make its own contribution to the building up of a

better world. 'India is no beggar of the West' says he in *Nationalism*.

Tagore says that it is his conviction that what India needs most is constructive work coming from within herself. 'In this work', he further says 'we must take all risks and go on doing the duties which by right are ours, in the teeth of persecution; winning moral victory at every step, by our failure and suffering. We must show those who are over us that we have in ourselves the strength of moral power, the power to suffer for Truth. Where we have nothing to show, we have only to beg.'⁷

⁶ *Philosophy of Tagore*, p. 298.

⁷ *Nationalism*.

THOUGHTS ON IMMORTALITY

By A. S. Narayana Pillai, M.A., M.Litt.,
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I

R. S. THOMAS in an article entitled 'The Will to Live' (July, 1941, *The Aryan Path*) makes a suggestive approach to the problem of the immortality of the soul. The problem is of such importance that an examination of the arguments is called for.

The author makes a distinction between (1) the desire for immortality which takes shape in individual and group consciousness as a definite belief, and (2) the expectation of immortality which follows from the perception of a certain fundamental law of life.

II

The desire for immortality is a mere wish to live again after death. That wish itself may spring from two other wishes:

(1) Love of life which cannot bear the thought of death depriving us of it, and (2) demand for another life as compensation for the miseries of this life.

In both these cases immortality can only be a hope, a mere *wish*. There is no guarantee of its being an *actual fact*. The function of religion is to bridge the gulf between the wish and the fact. How does it do it? By the crude and primitive device of making them identical. The wish becomes the fact: hope becomes creed: desire becomes definite belief. This device, according to the critics of religion (among whom are some psychologists, materialists and rationalists) is never successful. It stands on no sure footing. Psychology can point out

that if you entertain a wish for a long time and with sufficient intensity you come to believe in its objective existence. This is what is called wish-fulfilment.

The charge against the doctrine of immortality that it is due to wish-fulfilment is not a new one. It is the old charge against religion itself. It is an accusation which points out that the doctrine has no rational basis which alone can compel belief.

R. S. Thomas evidently accepts the validity of this conclusion but not its truth. That is to say, this charge would be true if immortality is of the *first* kind *viz.*, a desire that springs from the other two primary desires of love of life and love of a second chance to obtain what one has failed to get here in this life.

But the author contends that this is not the type of immortality that religion really preaches. It is the expectation of and therefore faith in the immortality of the soul based on definite observation and understanding of a deep principle of life. What is this principle?

III

The principle is that death applies only to a certain aspect of life. Death is not the opposite of life: it is part of the continuum called life. It is a stage, a stepping-stone. In nature itself life triumphs over death. Life flows on endlessly. The flower dies but is reborn in the fruit. The fruit perishes but the seed holds the secret of its life. The seed dies to blossom as the tree. Even when the tree dies, it turns into coal which contains the seed of new life. Surely death is not a final fact. It is only a phase of life.

Why even that phase? What produces it? Matter. Matter is an obstacle life has to contend with. The power of life is great but the power of matter is not negligible. Life has to overcome this power—which shows itself as death. Death, therefore, is the compelling force of inert matter. Though life wins the War in the end, matter gets a few trophies—death. The spirit lives: The body dies. That is the law of life. Immortality is therefore not a wish or a dream. It is a fact revealed in experience. But can there be bodily survival also? Immortality of the body as of the Spirit! Mr. Thomas is not clear on this point. But it may be presumed that his mention of Christ's resurrection is relevant to this. Christ rose from the grave—not in spirit only but in body also. Is that possible for all? Can we prevent bodily death—even though it be a phase in the process of life?

IV

Is there no way of defeating this death? Yes; by making matter *absolutely* powerless or by increasing the power of life by such an amount that matter cannot face it, or if it faces it is crushed absolutely. The former alternative is impossible. The inherent power of matter cannot be taken away by us. But the other alternative remains. We, as self-conscious beings or spirits can increase the power of life centred in us to such an extent that matter has not the ghost of a chance, that Death will be held at bay.

How is this to be achieved?

Through will-power—the power of the human will. The fact that this is a supreme force needs no proof.

History gives many instances as illustration. This will-power can be met and conquered by those who can learn to say with the psalmist 'I shall not die, but live'.

But how? The analogy is sought in evolution. On the physical side it is the story of a continuous adaptation to environment and by means of this adaptation a conquest of that environment. But there is also a spiritual side to this. The spirit also evolves. In fact, the spirit may have chosen the physical or the material as its evolutionary medium, to work towards a gradual abstraction from matter as a necessary means of self-expression or self-development.

V

This triumph over the tyranny of matter is a triumph over death. It is immortality. But this immortality has to be won. The spirit must will it and work for it. It is not got as a matter of course: it has to be earned. That also means that it is not for all. Those whose wills cannot command the power necessary to beat down the power of matter are throttled by matter. Death is the end of their lives. It is only those whose wills can triumph over the forces of matter who have immortality.

Immortality is therefore a possibility. It is known that the soul can leave the body for a certain length of time depending on different temperaments. At death comes this possibility. But it is not automatic. Will-power strengthened by long practice is necessary to enable the Spirit to fly away. Habitual attention to spiritual needs, to the world beyond is necessary. That gives

the strength which enables the Spirit to rise from the grave. On the other hand, if the material and the physical always dominate us, the will is enfeebled and 'the spirit is asphyxiated'.

Has anybody secured this immortality? Christ's coming from the grave is testimony to that! Even if the historicity of Christ is in doubt, and the whole thing is treated as an allegory, still the resurrection embodies a deep truth—the possibility of the power of will to triumph over the power of Matter that makes for death. That 'possibility' is indicated as inevitability in the life of Christ. It was the logical conclusion of his life and his powers. He had shown himself to be superior to nature and to the material world. Should he not triumph over death—a man of tremendous will-power that he was?

* * *

This is the thesis of Mr. Thomas. His article errs on the side of brevity. I have therefore thought it necessary to give in a connected manner the condensed and suggestive arguments of his. I have supplied the premises, and also drawn the conclusions. I have attempted to be true to his thoughts.

But this suggestive and interesting approach to the problem of immortality seems to end in confusion. It is unfortunate that the author is not clear in his mind as to (1) What the doctrine of immortality means; (2) What the doctrine of resurrection means; (3) What the relation is between the two.

A few other minor discrepancies, I shall not consider. But these are

the major confusions that strike one in an otherwise admirably written article.

VI

What is the doctrine of immortality?

Simply put, it is the doctrine that the soul of man does not cease to exist after the event called death, but continues to be even after that. What it does after that, where it exists and what is the nature of this new existence are related and relevant questions in religion and philosophy; but they do not come in the simple doctrine of the soul's existence after death.

Now this doctrine involves one or two assumptions; it is well that we bear them in mind.

First, it means that the soul is different from the body. That is to say, the doctrine of immortality rests on a dualism between body and soul. The body is one entity: the soul is another, a separate and separable entity. Together they constitute personality.

Secondly, the doctrine affirms that the soul can survive the body. Death can affect only the body. In fact, death is merely decomposition. And only a physically or materially composed entity like the body can decompose. The Spirit is not a material, composite body which can decompose. It is (this is a corollary) a simple non-material entity. Death in the sense in which we know it cannot touch the Spirit.

Thirdly, this impossibility to die belongs to the very nature of spirit; it arises out of its very constitution. That means, not merely that the Spirit (let us now speak of the human Spirit; whether animals have

souls is a moot question) of man will not die but also that it *cannot* die, (let us add, even if it wants to).

These assumptions are implicit in the doctrine of immortality forming part of almost all religions. They cannot be called into question without at the same time calling into question the doctrine of immortality. Any proof of the doctrine, either *a priori* or based on evidence, even if it does not start by proving these assumptions, must certainly not go against them.

Mr. Thomas starts out to give a proof of the doctrine of immortality which is more than (as we have pointed out) a mere wish-fulfilment. And he contradicts if not the first, the others of the aforesaid assumptions.

By making immortality conditional, he denies that no Spirit can die. Spirits without a strong 'will to live' will succumb to death. They will be 'asphyxiated'. Spirits too can die unless they gain the power to survive death.

The whole trend of his argument is that immortality is not the nature of Spirit; it is not an inherent quality. On the other hand it has to be worked for, willed and won. It involves a struggle and a process. Some will succeed; others may fail. Immortality is not a universal fact, it is only a possibility. One must work to make it an actuality.

It is difficult to see what kind of doctrine of immortality that the author defends in his thesis. It is, certainly not the simple, well-known one.

VII

What is the doctrine of resurrection?

It is the specific, Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ after he was crucified and was dead, was buried in the grave and that after a few days he rose *bodily* from the grave and ascended to heaven. The central point is the bodily ascension. Christ conquered death—the only death that we can speak of, the death of his body.

Whatever might be the basis of this conception, Mr. Thomas has produced only confusion by jumping from the doctrine of immortality to that of resurrection. The one deals with the possibility of the Spirit or soul of man surviving physical death: the other with the defiance of bodily death by the Spirit.

VIII

What is the relation between the two?

They may be related questions but then they should be treated sepa-

rately. Otherwise confusion results. Mr. Thomas's paper seems to indicate the possibility of resurrection or defiance of physical death for all and to base that possibility on the habitually trained 'will to live'. Christ's case is given as an instance of this possibility. Even if this is the point of his argument, it is not easy to understand how a habitual dominance of the spiritual in our will can in the last moment defy bodily death and give us another lease of physical life. Perhaps Mr. Thomas can explain.

* * *

I have set down these thoughts in the hope that they will stimulate discussion. It is because I feel that more lies in Mr. Thomas's paper than meets the eye, even if that be only as suggestions, that I have invited attention to it in these remarks.

Unless one always speaks the truth, one cannot find God Who is the soul of truth.

One must be very particular about telling the truth. Through truth one can realise God.

Everything false is bad. Even false garb is bad. If your mind is not quite in accord with the garb, then terrible ruin shall visit you. In this way, one grows hypocritical, and all fear of doing wrong or uttering falsehood disappears.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in the proper time, and let your mind be always fixed on God.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

THE SUPERIOR TYPE OF HUMANITY

(CONSIDERED AS THE CULMINATION OF EVOLUTION)¹

ON a previous occasion I have given an interpretation of evolution which conforms to the tenets of Hindu philosophy. The scientific theory and the conclusions of the great sages of India resemble much. In the Sutras of Patanjali, you will find comments on evolution in its entirety presented in the form of axioms. In truth evolution is not confined to the human species; it embraces the first manifestations of life as well as the 'superior type of humanity' which is its consummation; it operates in all the manifestations of matter, even before consciousness makes its appearance.

Deprived of this vision of the whole, certain modern scientists,—Watson, Pavlov, and others—have formulated the theory of tropisms by which they reduce human nature to the behaviour of animals and claim to explain everything by means of reflexes, by the mechanical play of attraction and repulsion. They thus attribute an over-important role to the nervous system. Consciousness, in that case, would be purely epiphenomenal and would be considered only as an accessory product of matter. This is a very narrow interpretation of an intransigent materialism.

If, on the contrary, one considers the totality of life, one understands that the power behind all evolution endeavours to attain a particular end. A constant law operates to raise each organism from a lower to

a higher level. As soon as we view the problem from this angle, the distinction generally made between Matter and Spirit begins to disappear gradually. From this higher point of view, Matter and Spirit appear respectively as the front and back of the same coin.

In the final analysis, matter loses its external form and we meet with only atoms, neutrons, and protons. These are the methods by which we try to express a reality which cannot be grasped. The boundaries between Matter and Spirit disappear and we speak only of energy. Besides, any object of perception becomes for us a meeting point for our ideas, our conceptions, our memories, and our emotions. Take for example this pencil; I see this pencil; certain rays come and strike my retina; the vibrations are transmitted to the nerve centre; but sonic foreign elements mingle with the visual image altering its purity; old memories, desires, and emotions awake by the play of the association of ideas. We see thus that in this 'no man's land' we cannot trace a very clear line of demarcation between Matter and Spirit.

The sages who have realized the ultimate end of life have a synoptic view, which enables them to go beyond the ordinary distinctions between Matter and Spirit. Now in the case of every organism there is a specific goal which the *elan vital* (plastic stress) wishes to attain to.

¹ A discourse given by Swami Siddheswarananda at Paris, in French; rendered into English by Sri P. Seshadri Iyer, M.L., of the Travancore University.

That is why every being evolves from a lower to a higher plane. It adapts itself to its environments in order to satisfy its wants and to guarantee the conservation of the species. It is thus subject to incessant change. It must launch a war without truce against the menaces of a hostile environment and in the course of this fight for life, it causes to flash out a latent power; it transforms itself in order to continue to be.

Here we see that the *elan vital* which operates in all the series of beings works in order that each organism may perpetuate itself. The same *elan* (stress) which enables the individual to ascend successive rungs raises it at last to the human level.

In this last stage, when this stress works on the external world it is called *Pravrittimarga* or the Path of Works. This route makes possible the attainment of a very high state of consciousness; then the vision of the totality dawns and the Universal Life becomes possible.

Jalaludin Rumi, the great Sufi poet of the eleventh century or thereabout, has written a well-known mystic work *Masnavi*. He employs the same language in dealing with the question of evolution: 'Consciousness is asleep in the mineral. It struggles in the vegetable. In the animal it is active. In man it becomes conscious of itself.' We find the same idea in the Sutras of Patanjali.

The function of Nature is therefore to fill each organism with the cosmic potential. There, thus, exists in every individual a dormant faculty, which when occasion arises, enables him to strive and transform himself incessantly. As soon as con-

sciousness blossoms out, man takes a complete view of things.

As soon as the ego begins to dominate in us, we start a life which is conditioned by desire. He becomes the plaything of instinctive attractions and repulsions. But the ultimate end of evolution is to produce the 'perfect being' (*sthita prajna*); and we find the description of this being towards the close of the second chapter of the *Bhagavadgita*. We see to what a level one in whom the conventional ego is dead can rise. This does not involve a suicide; on the contrary, this realization resulting from the death of the ego is the culminating point of life; and this realization can come in the course of this life itself.

In this matter, many religions (Christianity, Islam, and some aspects of Hinduism) hold that realization comes only after death. They proclaim that this life is limited, that man must abandon and disdain all things on earth. It is only in Heaven that he will find the Truth.

I would be far from criticising this attitude, if it would enable the individual to turn his attention to lead a spiritual life here and now. Vedanta gives to spirituality a far wider definition; it admits that man can travel towards the Supreme Goal, while integrally fulfilling the duties which present themselves to him; it thus includes the Divine as an element in daily life.

If this attitude does not satisfy us, we can always appeal to the concept of God; but if, like the Buddhists, we reject this latter concept, we can, still lead a spiritual life. Our principal endeavour should be to reduce in

ourselves the tension of the ego. The chrysalis disappears when the perfect insect, the butterfly, breaks out from its prison and comes out of its cocoon one day; when this moment comes, it can enjoy the fullest life; it can spread its wings to all the breezes. The butterfly has a rhythm totally different from that of the chrysalis.

According to the ideal of *Jivan-mukti* it is in 'this house itself' (the body) that realization must take place. The result of our attempts must evidently pertain to the PRESENT.

If the result remains problematic, if it is relegated to a dubious future, once we shall have fulfilled our destinies here, the question can be asked whether all this is nothing but simple faith. That is why many people have shown a certain contempt for the illusions of religions which postpone the happiness of man to an existence after death and which require the individual to forget all the present duties of the world.²

If we go deep into the Hindu religion we will understand that it embraces all the actions of our life. The *Bhagavadgita* is not a secret doctrine passed on only to the initiated in the solitude of the forest;

it was preached in the midst of the agitations of life, in the tumult of a battle.

When man lives in society he must accept the teachings of those who have gone beyond the social life and who remain in our midst in order to enlighten and guide us.

Personalities like Jesus and Buddha have been able to continue to live normally after having realized the extinction of the ego (which we call Nirvana). After having attained to this state of Super-consciousness, Sri Ramakrishna remained in society in order to give a new lead to humanity.

After realization the world does not change; it is the person who realizes the Truth that changes completely. From the moment he realizes the Truth, he becomes a superman; a new factor in evolution makes its appearance. The dream of a Golden Age will always remain a dream. Imagine that a magician transforms the whole of humanity with his wand; imagine that it is composed only of exceptional beings like Jesus and Buddha. It will be none the less true that in such an eventuality new waves of evolution issuing from the lower depths will carry new

² A related question immediately arises: How can we explain the fact that India has created such a great philosophy and has produced such great sages, while the people who live in India and who represent one-sixth of humanity are reduced to such economic distress?

The answer is this: In this mass of Indian humanity, only a small part enjoy a little of the comforts of existence, can have two meals a day; nearly all live in complete material misery. Western tourists and journalists, when confronted with this paradox have shown an inclination to attribute the responsibility for this state

to our religion. Swami Vivekananda has explained in his speeches on India that this is only a wrong application of religion. Neither numbers nor statistics can gauge the greatness of a religion. This will be like repeating the harsh words of Nietzsche: 'There has been only one Christian and he died on the Cross'. It is true that knowledge has not yet awakened among the Hindu masses. The cause of this is ignorance, ignorance in political and economic matters. The Indian paradox is but an accident of our history. Religion and philosophy cannot be held responsible for it.

elements proceeding from the Rajasic mode of Nature and all shall be as before. In this matter Vedanta is in agreement with Jesus: 'I shall be in agony till the end of the world.'

If we go through the history of all the nations we can see that men have always left the management of their affairs in the hands of those whom personal interest governed; those were thus often led to take a cruel and anti-social attitude in order to protect their own interests or those of their community. In order that humanity may rise, it is indispensable that a true society embracing the entire world shall be established and individual governments shall no longer follow the creed of separatist politics. The errors of history have not yet allowed such an orientation to humanity; the day when humanity shall feel the need of choosing as its representatives men of such quality, will veritably be a day of benediction.

Here we must remember that we have in us two quite different heritages: a spiritual and a biological one. The biological heritage is entirely instinctive. Endeavours after unification attempted on this lower plane cannot succeed; the individual will not progress and man will always remain a wolf for man.

In order that things may change, it is necessary that society will have at its top spiritual masters who endeavour to draw out those divine forces which are present in every individual. But if this is to happen, we want an ideal which exercises an invisible influence on the most precious elements in us. 'If, one day', says Mahatma Gandhi, 'I am

obliged, in order to maintain the ideal of India and to safeguard her liberty, to do something wrong and to employ unjust means I shall have been unfaithful to truth; India never shall revert to a diplomacy dictated by interest; if such a thing happens I shall have to take refuge in a cave in the Himalayas.'

One who has realized the Truth can help others to reduce the tension of the ego. He is precious in the eyes of the world, because he raises the general level of consciousness; he plays a social and a spiritual role, which conforms to the ideal of the *Bhagavadgita*.

When, in following the spiritual path, the aspirant has attained to this elevated state of consciousness, he has no more need for ordinary intelligence, which as we have seen, forms part of life; this intelligence functions only in the material or intellectual realm; he who is guided by intuition (Buddhi) begins to live the spiritual life.

What is the true role of the intelligence? In normal life, man yields to the impulses of the instinct. There comes a moment when the intelligence begins to function; it provides reins for primitive activities and thus enables them to be controlled. But in order that life may be seen in its entirety, it is necessary that the intuitive power functions; it is then that one feels the presence of the Atman-Brahman in every being and everything and the least action begins to have a value for the whole universe.

We may add that we cannot attain to this state of consciousness till we do not feel the want, the thirst, the

call within. Mere imitation will not help us. Copying a purely intellectual model is of no avail. If this need is strongly felt we shall have light; the *Gita* will prove a great help; we will know, on each occasion, how to reduce our internal tension.

What profit shall we derive from the purely external respect which we accord to this or that sacred book? If we have the proper tension within, our respect shall be for the spirit and not for the letter. This is the counsel of the *Gita*. We can abandon all books and discard all conventions if we remain loyal to the Spirit.

It is thus that in India during certain religious festivals people dress statues in rich finery and worship them with the highest respect. But as soon as the festival is over, the improvised idols are thrown into water. This is not the cult of the idol, but the cult of the Ideal. The image serves to bring out the ideal. When the ideal is alive in our heart, the image becomes superfluous; it goes to the bed of Ganges to join the idols of past festivals. If you read the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* you will see that this is how Sri Ramakrishna himself understood the cult of the idols.

If we live imprisoned within the flesh, if we see only with our bodily eyes, we will never attain to true spirituality. Once the idol has vanished in the waves of the Ganges, the spirit of inquiry will wake in us, and this spirit respects neither conventions nor traditions. Was not the Buddha himself the first to revolt against Hindu scriptures? He declared that he would not accept the Vedas which taught the cult of externalism.

'I shall find the path myself.' Nevertheless, Sankara, later, discovered once again in the Upanishads the teaching of Buddha himself.

From the foregoing we see that the respect which we accord to this or that scripture contributes nothing to our spiritual advance. It is the internal life that will enable us to realize perfection, under whatever form this realization takes place. The man of realization acquires for the whole of society an inestimable value.

It is necessary for us, therefore, to raise ourselves from the present condition. What we will have to overcome is self interest; this is the enemy at our door. Once that is done we can utilize the internal *elan* to surmount another rung of the ladder.

With the aid of fossil impressions, scientists have reconstructed prehistoric monsters. Some of these monsters weighed nearly eighty tons. From the measurement of the cranium it is clear that the brain did not weigh more than a few grammes. In the case of man whose average weight is seventy kilogrammes the grey matter weighs one thousand eight hundred grammes. If in the course of evolution the brain has assumed such importance with man, it is because man must utilize all the powers of the new organ. Einstein has jokingly remarked: 'If, in the face of this privilege, man continue to let himself be guided by instinct, he would be making an improper use of his intelligence. In that case the vertebral column, by itself would have sufficed.'

Since this physiological force has developed in us, it must become a

new auxiliary; thanks to it, we can rise still higher and free ourselves from the prison of our ego. Every human being has in him the possibility of surmounting yet another step and passing from the human to the superhuman plane. This force which is latent in every being, we, in India, call *Kundalini*. In the last analysis, it is this stress, which according to the level of evolution reached by the individual, manifests itself at a different level. We have to sublimate this energy. One can compare the effort which will be involved to the drawing of the water flowing out of a hose. If the pressure is not sufficient, the water stops at a lower level. In order that the water shall mount up to the higher levels there must be no waste at the lower levels.

If we know how to direct our efforts properly, we will finish by realizing the ideal type which the *Bhagavadgita* presents to us. We shall no longer be affected by good or bad fortune. We shall have expelled from us envy, cupidity,

and all forms of desire; in one word we shall have freed ourselves from the grips of the external world. At last when our intelligence shall have been firmly established, we will never go astray. In truth, there is no partition between us and the Absolute. It will suffice if we make a first attempt to attain to this state of indifference towards the things of the external world. All disharmonies will vanish. This is the true role of intelligence.

So long as the Ego remains the master of our life, we will establish new gradations of value; we will set up new differentiations between men; we will lose the vision of oneness; we will distinguish castes and sub-castes; we will raise frontiers among men. This is how cruelty is born, and this cruelty is the fruit of our ignorance. When intelligence dawns, all differentiations cease to be, all agitations vanish and the vision of Totality is attained.

But, the road is long and we cannot follow it to the end unless we practise meditation with assiduity.

Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, and a Mohammedan Mohammedanism. For the Hindu the ancient path, the path of the Aryan Rishis, is the best. A truly religious man should think that other religions are also so many paths leading to the Truth. We should always maintain an attitude of respect towards other religions. Dispute not. As you rest firmly on your own faith and opinion, allow others also equal liberty to stand by their own faith and opinion. By mere disputation you will never succeed in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends on him, every man will understand his own mistakes.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

SRI ALAGIA SINGA PERUMAL

SEVERAL movements have been rousing the Indian people to new life, during the last one hundred years. It is no exaggeration to say that the fiery words of Swami Vivekananda have given a great impetus to the present national movement. But it may surprise many to know that the man who was responsible for the rise to world-fame of this great soul of Bengal was a poor South Indian teacher. But the truth of this will be clear to those who read the life of Alagia Singa Perumal.

Mandayam Chakravarti Alagia Singa Perumal was born of an ordinary family. He was born in 1865 in Chickmagalur in Mysore. Mr. Narasimhachariar, his father, was employed in the Municipal Council of that place.

Alasinga had his education at first in the Madras Presidency College, and then in the Madras Christian College. It is to be noted that he was one of the dearest pupils of Dr. Miller. In 1884, Alasinga passed the B.A. examination in Physics. He then joined the Law College, but studied there only for a short time.

He then gave up collegiate education, and went in search of some employment.

He became a teacher in a private school at Kumbakonam. In 1887 he joined the staff of the Pachaiappa School at Chidambaram. In three years' time, he was, in view of his efficiency, taken to the Pachiappa High School at Madras. He was the Headmaster there and held that post, with great honour for a long time. In his last days he was also

appointed as the Professor of Physics in the Pachiappa's College. It was only after his untimely death that Mr. Lakshminarasu got that place.

Alasinga was one of those who laboured hard to raise the Pachiappa High School to the status of a College. He started the institution, the Y. M. I. A. (Young Men's Indian Association) even before Annie Besant. He had arranged for two lectures to be delivered every week in that Association.

Alasinga's service did not stop with imparting instruction to students. He devoted his energies to the cause of educating the public and of helping and recommending for help the poor people in distress. He always did what he could by way of monetary help or physical labour, to those who resorted to him. He had no attachment to money. He never sought monetary help from anyone for his own sake. But he would give what he had to friends, and would even borrow and help them. Though he was earning a hundred or a hundred and fifty rupees a month, he had to live a poor man's life, because he was so generous to those who were needy. After his death it became necessary to seek the help of the trustees of the Pachiappa Trust and of the public, for bringing up his children. What other end can a generous-hearted man have!

Alasinga was no doubt poor; but all great men found in him a respectable gentleman. Lokamanya Tilak, Swami Vivekananda, Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Sir V. Krishnaswami Iyer, Sir K. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sir

•V. P. Madhava Rao, Dr. Nair and others were a few among his dearest friends. This fact will suffice to show his greatness.

Alasinga helped the poor, brought the light of knowledge to the young, infused wisdom into the wealthy. And over and above all these he rendered a great service to our land and the world. No son of India could ever forget this help. And this service consisted in the efforts he made to send Swami Vivekananda to the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

The news that a great Parliament of Religions was meeting in America in 1893 spread in India. Dr. Barrows, the chief among those who were in charge of the Parliament, had written to Dr. Miller requesting him to expound Hinduism to the Parliament. Dr. Miller told this to Yogi Parthasarathi Ayyangar of Triplicane. Mr. Ayyangar had connections with the American Hindu League (or Association). He had already translated into English and sent to America, the Vaishnavite book 'Sri Vachana Bhushanam'.

Alasinga was Yogi Parthasarathi Ayyangar's sister's son. Alasinga often used to receive spiritual instruction from the Yogi. It was from him that Alasinga came to know about the Parliament of Religions. Having come to feel that sending translations of books to America was of no use, he resolved to send a worthy representative to that country. Since Prof. M. Rangachariar (his sister's husband) had the gift of speech, he requested the professor to go to Chicago. But he refused to go. Alasinga then felt sorry that a fine opportunity was being lost to India,

the land that was steeped in spirituality.

Meanwhile Alasinga learnt one day from his younger brother Mr. M. C. Krishnamachariar that a young Sannyasin well-versed in English had arrived at the house of Mr. Manmathanath Bhattacharjee, the Accountant-General of Madras. 'What! a Sannyasi, and well-versed in English!' wondered Alasinga. An English-knowing Sannyasi was considered 'a rare bird' then. And to see the 'bird', Alasinga went with his relatives and friends (Messrs. G. G. Narasimhachar, R. A. Krishnamachar, G. Venkata Rao, T. R. Balaji Rao, and C. Hanumantha Rao). Even at the first meeting these persons understood the intellectual brilliance of the young monk. Our friends who were graduates and masters of arts stood stupefied by the hot and unexpected answers of the monk. Of all these, Alasinga understood Vivekananda best.

Alasinga even then understood that this monk was the genius he was in search of. A conversation was held with the monk in the Triplicane Literary Society. When the talk turned on the Chicago Parliament of Religions and when he was asked to go to the Parliament as a representative, the Swami answered, 'That divine command which Jesus and Moses got must come to me.'

Swami Vivekananda then styled himself as Satchidananda. Alasinga began to frequent the house of Bhattacharjee in Mylapore, where the Swami was staying. The Swami used to call him Alasinga, and give him a very warm welcome. Alasinga

began to persuade Vivekananda to go to Chicago; whenever opportunity occurred he gently hammered this idea into the Swami's head. But the Swami did not agree to go. But the desire of a devotee never goes unfulfilled. Alasinga's desire began to 'work' in the Swami's mind. It was the month of Masi (February-March). It was the Sivaratri day. The Swami spoke with no one that day. He was immersed in Samadhi. An irrepressible emotion (relating to Alasinga's thought) rose in him. He got up enthusiastically, feeling that he had got the divine command. He wrote to Sri Ramakrishna's wife and requested her permission to go to Chicago. The Master's wife readily permitted him.

Alasinga was supremely happy. Money had now to be collected. Even that appeared quite an easy task. A zamindar assured Alasinga that he would meet the entire expenses of the trip. But two months before the time of departure for America, the zamindar, at the instigation of some people, expressed his inability to meet the entire cost of the tour. Alasinga wept to hear this. But he did not despair. He believed that it was God's wish that the Swami should be sent abroad not with the help given by a single individual, but with the co-operation of the many. So he began to collect money from friends. The Raja of Ramnad and the Maharaja of Mysore gave Rs. 500 each. A sum of Rs. 3,000 was collected in three days. This shows what a great Karmayogi Alasinga was. Alasinga went to Bombay with this sum and paid the amount to Messrs. Cook & Sons in the name of the Swami.

When Swami Vivekananda went to Chicago he found that the Parliament of Religions had been put off by a month. The money he had was insufficient. More money was needed as he had to wait for a month more. With the little money he had, the Swami cabled to Alasinga requesting him to send money to return home. The Swami that night had a dream in which the Paramahansa seemed to ask him, 'I have brought you 6000 miles. Shall I not feed you?'

When Alasinga got the cable he was perplexed. He decided to send money somehow. When a monk had, with confidence in him, gone to the other end of the world, was he to give him up?—this thought worried Alasinga. In the end he approached Mr. V. Kalyanarama Iyer, a book-seller, for a loan of Rs. 1,000. He immediately helped him with this amount, even without having a promissory note executed. Monetary help was immediately cabled to America.

That after the conclusion of the Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda became world-famous and that several men offered their services to him are matters of history and need not be detailed here. When the Swami returned to India, several American millionaires followed him as his disciples. One of these, finding how poor Alasinga was, offered to deposit a lakh of rupees in his name in a bank. Sister Nivedita informed Alasinga of this by wire. But Alasinga did not want to become the slave of 'soul-killing' money. He thought for half an hour and then replied by wire saying that while he was thankful for the goodwill shown, he would not accept the

money. He told his friends that he could not forsake his freedom for the sake of money. Thus he demonstrated that he never sought monetary help for selfish purposes.

It became clear that no one in the Parliament of Religions could be the peer of Vivekananda. The Americans in U. S. A. requested the Swami to preach the Hindu faith in their land. The Swami felt that America was a land worthy to receive his preaching, and stayed there for three or four years, delivering fine lectures in many cities. And a journal was needed in order to acquaint the Indian public with all these things, in a detailed manner.

Alasinga started in 1895 a monthly journal entitled the *Brahmavadin*. Prof. M. Rangachariar contributed articles to this magazine for two years. And then for ten years Messrs. R. A. Krishnamachariar and G. G. Narasimhachariar wrote to the journal. Later Alasinga himself wrote to the journal till he died. After his death his sons carried on the journal for five years. The journal ceased publication in 1914.

As the *Brahmavadin* was useful only to elderly and educated people, Alasinga was of the opinion that a journal for the benefit of the youths must be started. Thus came into existence the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Dr. Nanjunda Rao financed its starting, while Messrs. G. G. Narasimhachariar and B. R. Rajam Iyer contributed articles.

Swami Vivekananda felt that it would be difficult for Alasinga to manage both the journals. The *Prabuddha Bharata* was then transferred to the Ramakrishna Math at the beautiful place, Mayavati in the

Himalayas. This lamp lighted by this great man in South India is even now spreading the light of wisdom from the Himalayan heights.

In 1907, Mr. N. Thirumalachariar joined hands with Alasinga with the view of conducting the *Brahmavadin* on better lines. But Mr. Thirumalachariar was an extremist in politics. Fearing that Government may do harm to the paper if political matters were brought into the journal, Mr. Achariar started a separate paper in the *Brahmavadin* press. This was *India*. After some time *India* was issued from a press of its own. Alasinga wanted 'force and vigour' in the writings in the press and took into the *India* organization Poet Subramaniya Bharathi who was working in the *Swadesamitran*.

Poet Subramaniya Bharathi was at Pondicherry when he heard of the untimely demise of Alasinga. He wept on hearing the news, and thus wrote in the *India*:

'The sad news of the passing away of Alasinga at Triplicane, Madras, on the evening of Tuesday, last (May 11, 1909) reached us the next day. Patriots are of two sorts. One sort is that which plays on the stage. The other sort labours from behind the screen, not caring for fame. The latter must be considered worthier than the former, and is in no way inferior to it. The late Alasinga belonged to the latter type. He was for a long time a Headmaster in the Pachaiappa's College. He had several other duties also. But in the midst of all this work, he kept unextinguished in his heart the flame of patriotism. Alasinga has done to the writer of this note, immense help as occasions arose, by means of his friendliness and his advice based on his ripe experience. He was one of those who were responsible for the founding of this *India*. When we asked Sister Nivedita at Calcutta: 'There are in Madras no patriot-leaders old enough to supervise and guide youths like us; what are we to do?' The

Sister replied, 'Alasinga is there. If you have doubts regarding public affairs you may have them cleared by him.' Alasinga was deeply interested in the Vedantic preaching of Swami Vivekananda, which preaching is the mother to our patriotic endeavours. It was Alasinga who earned honour for India by "discovering" Swami Vivekananda when he was wandering in South India as an ordinary monk in 1893. It was due to his efforts that the Swami was able to go to America and make the Arya-dharma well-known in that land. Later he started, in accordance with the

Swami's commands, a Vedantic monthly *Brahmavadin* and had been conducting it ably for the past fifteen years. His death is a great loss to the entire nation. He was forty-four at the time of his death. Our hearty condolences we offer to the family which has thus lost him prematurely.'

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SCIENCE AND A 'LIVING FAITH'

By Brahmachari Balakrishnan

MODERN science—more correctly, applied science—has been, from the beginning, instrumental in setting a keener edge on man's baser appetites. It has fed his passions, especially his passion for conquest, with a baneful thoroughness, and made him dream of a world Empire the road to which is now paved with human skulls. But while condemning science for its active and speedy aid in the wholesale massacre of men and destruction of civilization, we cannot forget its services to the scientific religion, especially Advaita Vedanta. Modern thought, inspired by the new wisdom of science has been 'pulvarizing the porcelain foundations of all dualistic and dogmatic religions'. For good or for bad, there is a general breakdown in men's faith in theistic religions. Rightly does Octavius B. Frothingham observe: 'Definitions of God have been vanishing, idols have been tumbling, symbols have been falling away; but the Being has been steadily coming forward from the background, looming up from the

abyss.' As such it is found fancy to expect denominational or anthropomorphic religions to survive. What will emerge from this vortex of faiths to take its place in human hearts will largely be determined by the spiritual impulse men receive in their modern setting.

The modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more 'believe'. The contagion of the 'scientific doubt' has caught him and he is in a mood to question everything. Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows, is impossible for him. It is equally impossible for him to live without believing in some religion, call it faith or metaphysics. Thus, 'the choice that is given to us' as Aldous Huxley remarks, 'is not between some kind of metaphysic and no metaphysic; it is always between a

good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic.'¹

A religion to suit the needs of the modern mind with its ultra-rational bent, must, first of all, vindicate its vitality by meeting the challenge of science and must validate its vigour for growth with man's evolving life. It must afford an inspiring guidance to men not only in exceptional moments of feasting and ceremonial or on special festival days, but in all moments of life. In a word, it must be a 'living faith' with freedom of belief as its very breath, a faith that must broaden out and press the ever-broadening life into service, a faith that must improve and perfect itself with the improvement and perfection of the individual whose it is meant to be, yet by whom it is itself guided also.

Before he enters the sanctum of his choice, the man of today wants to be assured of his fundamental right: freedom of belief, freedom to accept what his conviction tells him is essentially right and to reject what his deepest apprehension tells him is fundamentally wrong. There is a saying in Sanskrit which is a testament of freedom from the Exalted One and which places Buddhism on the lines of modern science, on the lines of everything that stands for living progress: '*Parikshya Bhikshavo grahyam; madvacho na tu gauravat*'. Do not accept my word, O Monks, out of regard for me, but only after having duly examined and considered it. The genius of freedom consists in the freedom of worship it gives to its votary. If religion is to function as

an abiding influence, it has to be an inward growth in the aspirant; nothing externally or artificially imposed can bring this about. This striking feature of tolerance which is a unique trait of Hinduism is brought out in the words of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, who after pouring out the eighteen chapters of the *Bhagavad-gita* tells Arjuna: 'Secret of secrets, I have declared to thee. Reflect well over it and act.' It is highly significant that this charter of freedom received promising confirmation from the hands of Sri Ramakrishna who came as a strong proof of the validity and vitality of Hinduism. He once told one of his disciples: 'If you think you can find God better away from me, then go. My one desire is that you should raise yourself above the misery of the world and enjoy divine beatitude.'

In Ramakrishna's life Hinduism received a necessary and thoroughly up-to-date restatement of its fundamentals. Hence all the genius of the Mother faith, the genius for assimilation and reaction, for expelling all that could not be absorbed and absorbing all that could not be expelled was in his faith also. To Ramakrishna religion was essentially something to be lived and the fact that he built his faith on the bedrock of transcendental realizations silenced the scientists, agnostics, and other speculative philosophers whose polemics went 'in wandering mazes lost'. The physicist in his attempt to get at Reality pierces through the illusory appearance of the sense-world, but comes and strikes his head against the four-dimensional continuum, and there he halts. Scientists modestly admit that there

¹ *Ends and Means*, p. 252.

are realms which lie outside science. Dr. Malinowski rightly observes that, 'Religious revelation is an experience which as a matter of principle lies beyond the domain of science'. This is at the same time an avowal of their limitations and an affirmation of the spiritual domain behind the physical phenomena. More confirming are the words of Sir Arthur Eddington, who for that matter has been stamped a mystic: 'Whilst therefore I contemplate a spiritual domain underlying the physical world as a whole, I do not think of it as distributed so that to each element of time and space there is a corresponding portion of the spiritual background.'² It is this very same spiritual domain which to the scientists is a matter of guess, that Ramakrishna realized as the very essence of his own being. And where the scientists failed ignominiously, Ramakrishna came out with flying colours. What to the scientist is a matter of contemplation and guess was to him a living experience more real and immediate than that of the sense-world. The truth of his transcendental experience of the spiritual Reality is confirmed by the supreme realization of the magnificent oneness of the universe as the essence of his own being to which his own words bear striking testimony. When they first met, to Noren's question whether he has seen God or not, Ramakrishna replied thus: 'Yes, I see Him more *really* than I see you.'

The cause of the failure of the scientist should be sought in the fallacy of opposing means and ends. Material tools, the only ones at the

disposal of science can never achieve spiritual ends. Herbert Spencer writes, 'Ultimate scientific ideas are all representations of realities that cannot be comprehended. . . . In all directions the scientist's investigations bring him face to face with an insoluble enigma. He learns at once the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect—its power in dealing with all that comes within the range of experience, its impotence in dealing with all that transcends sense-experience. . . . And herein was Ramakrishna's success: Knowing the ultimate Reality to transcend intellectual comprehension, he chose the instrument of the supra-intellectual *intuition*, to plumb the depths of Reality. It must be admitted that in this he was more scientific than the scientists themselves for did he not with true scientific skill adopt spiritual means to realize spiritual ends, to achieve his identity with the All? It is this realization of a living oneness, 'the sympathetic awareness of the Totality' that can furnish the world with the rationale of the concept of equality and fraternity and provide it with a basis on which may be built up the much-needed edifice of universal brotherhood. Indeed it is from this realization that emerged his glorious religion which declared: 'Jiva is Siva', the religion of service of God in suffering humanity. And it is highly gratifying to note that the institution that has sprung up under his inspiration has dedicated itself to this healing religion and has thrown heart and soul into humanitarian works of every description. Can the fountains

² *New Pathways in Science*, p. 322.

³ *First Principles*, New York, 1910; p. 56.

of religion be more life-giving and elevating than this?

The claims of Ramakrishna's religion to a highly evolved religion is implicit in the harmony of religions which Ramakrishna preached. In the religion lived and preached by Ramakrishna the highest and best in all religions found an organic unity. Ramakrishna had by the realizations of the fundamentals of every religion, drawn freely from them their silken threads to weave out a compact whole. This made him declare with all the emphasis at his command that all different faiths lead to one and the same goal. His advent thus marks a new epoch in the evolution of religion; and through his influence all sects and communities, retaining the individual characteristics of their faiths, will transcend the limitations of their narrow and sectarian perspective and pave the way for a universal brotherhood.

And already light is dawning along the path. Ramakrishna's living religion has attracted thousands of human hearts from all corners of the world. People of divergent views and different beliefs belonging to different walks of life crowd together under the benign banner of his all-

comprehensive faith. Christians, Hindus, and Mohammedans, psychologists, scientists, and philosophers muster strong to do him homage. Before his religion the official religion pales away and when his Christian and Muslim admirers wend their way to Churches and Mosques they do so enshrining Ramakrishna in the sanctum of their hearts, for was he not Christ, Krishna and Mohammed in one?

Evidently the world is now under the travails of a new birth, and the eyes of the thoughtful and the peace-loving all the world over are turned towards India for solace; for has she not, through her sovereign sense of the Infinite, ministered to the world down the ages all that gives peace and light? Reconstruction is in the air and it must follow the present turmoil as night the day. In the New World Order that will come to be built, the builders will have to depend for their spiritual inspiration upon all the world religions and not upon one alone, any more than they will have to rely upon one country alone. Then will once again be realized by the world the supreme significance of this message of Ramakrishna, the living synthesis of all religions.

He who can himself approach God with sincerity, earnest prayer and deep longing, needs no Guru. But such deep yearning of the soul is very rare; hence the necessity of a Guru. The Guru is only one, but Upagurus (subsidiary teachers) may be many. He is an Upaguru from whom anything whatsoever is learned. The Great Avadhuta (an ascetic of high order mentioned in the Bhagavata) had twenty-four such Upagurus.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

SRI MADHUSUDANASARASVATI

By Swami Jagadiswarananda

THE personality and works of Sri Madhusudanasarasvati occupy a shining place in the religious history of India. His immortal book on Advaita Vedanta, *Advaitasiddhi*,¹ and other luminous writings² dealing with the philosophical and devotional aspects of Hinduism have endeared him to the scholar as well as the religious aspirant of subsequent generations. The personality of this great scholar-saint is perhaps more interesting than even his literary contributions. But we do not know much about his life, extending over a century. I wish to present here those precious details that are made available as a result of researches, and indicate his most important works.

During the religious persecutions of Sahabuddin Ghori several families of Brahmins seeking a peaceful atmosphere migrated from Kanouj to Navadvipa in the District of Nuddea. Among those who settled there was a Brahmin of the Kasyapagotra

¹ There are four important philosophical works in Sanskrit known as *Ishitasiddhi*, *Naishkarmyasiddhi*, *Brahmasiddhi* and *Advaitasiddhi*. They propound the logic of Advaitism. The last one is divided into four chapters dealing with the ascertainment of the illusoriness of phenomena, study of the Self, means and methods of enlightenment, and liberation, respectively. The well-known annotations of *Advaitasiddhi* are: *Siddhivivakhya* which refutes *Tarangini* and *Prakasha* of Dvaita school, *Laghuchandrika* and *Guruchandrika*.

² They are: Commentaries on the *Bhagavadgīta*, *Dasastoki* and *Atmabhoda* of Sri Sankaracharya, parts of Sri *Bhagavata*, *Samkshepasariraka*, *Sandilyasutras*, *Siddhan'talesa*, *Sivamahimnah Stotra* and some other original writings such as *Gilanibandha*, *Bhaktireneyana*, *Vedantakalpalatika*, *Prasathanabheda*, *Anandamandakini*, *Advaita-ratnaraksha* and *Haralilaviveka*.

called Ramamisra in whose illustrious line the great saint was born, seventh in descent. Ramamisra's great grandson had a son named Gunarnavacharya who, due to some cause, removed the family to Jessore. His son, one Purandaracharya, whose fortune it was to have Sri Madhusudana as one among his four learned sons, once more changed his family residence along with other families who migrated, for fear of losing caste under Mohammedan influence fast spreading to the east. For Bengal was then newly conquered and was governed by Man Singh, general and brother-in-law of Akbar. Purandaracharya was a man of learning and importance, and was therefore able to secure the protection of an independent Hindu chief, Kandarpa-narayana III of Madhavapassa. He therefore came away from Jessore and settled at a place called Kotali-para at Faridpur in East Bengal. Here he built his house and dedicated a temple to Dakshinamurti-kali with a tank facing it. Even today they serve to call to one's mind their founder's name.³

In this quiet natural surroundings Sri Madhusudanasarasvati was born sometime between 1525 and 1530 A.D.⁴ His father gave him the name Kamalanayana by which he was known till he became a Sannyasi.

³ A memorial Reading Room and Library was founded in this locality in 1920, known by the name *Madhusudan Sarasvati Mandir*.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of his date and place of birth see the Introduction to Pandit Rajendranath Ghosh's Bengali translation of *Advaitasiddhi* and P. C. Dewanji's *Siddhantabindu* published by Baroda Central Library.

sin. At five Kamalanayana was invested with sacred thread. Purandaracharya, who was himself a good scholar and could compose verses extempore even at the age of 18, gave his sons education of a high order. Kamalanayana soon distinguished himself in the group by his unusual brilliance. By the time he was twelve he mastered the various subjects that were taught to a student of his day—Kavya, Vyakarana, Alamkara, Nyaya, and the rest. According to the account of Goswami Damodar Sastri he studied Nyaya under Hari Rama Tarkavagisa, identified with Sri Rama mentioned in *Advaitasiddhi* and *Gudharthadipika*.⁵ He further prosecuted his study of Nyaya at Navadvipa, a premier seat of Sanskrit learning in those days, under Mathuranaatha the greatest teacher of Navyanyaya in the country after Ragunathasiromani. That Sri Madhusudana had a perfect command of the methodology of Navyanyaya is evident from every page of his expositions.

It was at this time that a turn in the life of Kamalanayana took place. The story is told that Kamalanayana got disgusted with worldly wealth when Kandarpanarayana, the chief of the place, denied to make a grant of a piece of land to his father recognizing the intellectual attainments of the four sons. So Kamalanayana left his hearth and home, when he was only twelve, and determined to go to Benares to become a Sannyasin without yielding to the persuasions of his

brothers to give up his decision. At the time the river Madhumati near his village was in full flood; but through the favour of God Varuna he was able to cross it safely. There is the talk in the country that the above name of the river has its origin in the miracle associated with Madhusudana. The descendants of Kamalanayana are still there and it is believed that the family even today is immune from all danger of being drowned in the Madhumati river owing to this boon conferred by Varuna upon one of their ancestors. Descendants of his brothers are recognized for their social status and learning even at the present time.

Renouncing home and future domestic ties as a young Brahmancharin, and full of devotional fervour, Kamalanayana reached Benares with the hope of meeting Sri Chaitanya, who at the time of his arrival had left Benares for Puri. At Benares he took up the study of Advaita philosophy as a student of the renowned Advaitin of Benares at the time, Ramatirtha, known to us as the author of the well-known commentaries on *Vedantasara* and *Samskhepasariraka*. To facilitate a study of Advaita in the basic texts a thorough knowledge of Mimamsa is essential; so Kamalanayana sought the help of a teacher to learn that subject. And soon he found him in Madhavasarasvati. The young scholar could concentrate his attention on whatever subject he studied to an extraordinary degree so much so that he often got completely absorbed in the meaning of what he studied; and hardly any heed to food and sleep was paid. Study was a great austerity for him. The study of Advaita

⁵ This is his famous commentary on *Gita* and deserves to be studied by all who wish to have a profound understanding of *Gita* as well as the religious literature of India.

created in him such a great interest that he was compelled to refute the Dvaita doctrine at the suggestion of his teacher Ramatirtha.⁶ Although he could not favour the Dvaita view he was ever a devotee of his Chosen Ideal.

Kamalanayana's motive in coming to Benares was to get himself initiated into Sannyasa, for which purpose he approached Ramatirtha from whom he learned Advaita. Reluctant to initiate him into the order himself, Ramatirtha sent Kamalanayana to Visvesvarasarasvati, a leading Sannyasin of Benares at the time, who had a large number of disciples. But the Guru, before initiating Kamalanayana into the holy order, with a view to test his general competency, scriptural knowledge and philosophical insight, ordered him to write a commentary on the *Bhagavadgita*. Visvesvarasarasvati was absent from Benares for about an year on a pilgrimage. On his return he found that his brilliant disciple had written a large part of his commentary; and finding its excellence⁷ he at once initiated Kamalanayana into Sannyasa and conferred on him the

⁶ His refutation of Dvaita is embodied in his *magnum opus* *Advaitasiddhi*, a work which he wrote at the instance of Ramatirtha.

⁷ For it throws much light on the inner meaning of the *Gita*. He comments on every word of the text and assembles a wealth of pertinent ideas and arguments touching on all points of Advaita and even of other systems in as much as they are helpful to elucidate Advaita. For the most part he follows Sri Sankara but parts way when he states that Bhakti and Karma are independent means of liberation. His is a synthetic view. However his reverence to Sri Sankara is as profound as his grasp of his Bhashya is thorough.

monastic appellation Madhusudanasarasvati.

It is no wonder that such a worthy disciple who easily stood in the very first place among his co-students evoked the jealousy of some of them. This was known to Visvesvarasarasvati, who on one occasion went on a pilgrimage with all his disciples. This gave an opportunity to Sri Madhusudana to have intimate talks with his Guru regarding spiritual practices. During the journey the party came to a charming solitary place on the banks of the Yamuna where Sri Madhusudana was asked by his teacher to stay performing spiritual exercises till himself and the rest returned after going to some other places. Living on such food as was supplied by Providence through distant villagers, Sri Madhusudana entered heart and soul into Sadhana at that place, and spent some days enjoying the bliss of Samadhi (profound absorption in God).

It was during this time that a strange incident happened, which compelled his brother disciples to recognize the greatness of his character and also which brought him into contact with the Moghul Emperor at Delhi. The incident is narrated thus: One of Akbar's favourite Begums was attacked by a colic pain. Medical treatment was of no avail. Quite helpless, she begged God's mercy. One night she dreamt that a Hindu monk residing on the bank of the Jumna gave her some medicine that cured her immediately. The following day she told the dream to Akbar who with his genuine reverence for Sannyasins ordered an enquiry. Soon the Hindu monk Madhusudana was discovered there. The imperial

couple went to him in disguise. The Begum recognized Madhusudana to be the monk seen in her dream and told him all about her pain and dream. On hearing this Madhusudana prayed to God and blessed her. Her cure was instantaneous. The Emperor personally offered gold coins and jewels to Madhusudana who humbly declined them saying that there was no necessity of those things for the preservation of his body. The Emperor in disguise revealed his identity to Madhusudana, left some jewels there on the sands, in spite of the latter's stern refusal, and promised to do any service in his power whenever called upon to do so by him. Visvesvarasarasvati returned in time and found to his astonishment the jewels lying scattered on the ground. Now the other disciples heard the whole story and were astonished at the greatness of Madhusudanasarasvati.

Time passed on and our venerable saint-scholar was known to all in Benares. His reputation spread far and wide, as his great philosophical and religious works were written and published one by one. He was staying in Benares at Gopal Math in Chatuhshashthiyogini Ghat which was then repaired by Raja Pratapaditya, a contemporary of Sri Madhusudana and an independent chief of Bengal. He used to worship his Ishta, Sri Gopala, in the Math every day. Soon the radiant holiness and profound erudition of Sri Madhusudana attracted to him several disciples. He was admired by his friends as a doughty defender of Advaitism. Among his disciples were Balabhadra at whose entreaty he wrote his famous *Siddhantabindu*

elucidating all the crucial points of Advaita. Balabhadra is known also as the writer of the commentary *Siddhivyakhya* on *Advaitasiddhi* in which he refuted Vyasarama's *Tarangini* and Srinivasa's *Prakasa*. Seshagovinda and Purushottamasarasvati were two other disciples of Madhusudana. The last mentioned disciple has annotated *Siddhantabindu*.⁸ Seshagovinda's name is preserved through his commentary on Sri Sankara's *Sarvasiddhanta-sangraha*. He was a Maharashtrian, son of Krishnadikshita and Guru of Bhattojjidikshita. In what high esteem Seshagovinda held his Guru is evident from a line in his commentary: *Sarasvaty avataram tam vande Sri Madhusudanam*.

Sri Madhusudanasarasvati did not bar any disciple who approached him for knowledge, be he opposed to his favourite school of thought, or be his motive to controvert the teacher himself. Sri Madhusudana was so magnanimous that when Vyasarama, the talented disciple of the famous Dvaita Acharya Vyasatirtha, whose famous polemical work against Advaita philosophy, *Nyayamrita*, Sri Madhusudana had controverted in his *magnum opus*, approached him at the instance of his aged Guru, with a view to study *Advaitasiddhi* directly from the author himself, he, knowing that Vyasarama was the disciple of Vyasatirtha and that he came to learn from him thoroughly the Advaitic arguments against Dvaita and to refute it subsequently, gladly instructed him as any of his own disciples. When this disciple,

⁸ This work is included in the *Siddhantabindu* published in Baroda Oriental Series.

on finishing his course, presented his teacher with a copy of this *Tarangini* — a work in which *Advaitasiddhi* is refuted vigorously— instead of showing any disfavour, Sri Madhusudana only remarked that it did not behove him to challenge a disciple of his himself but that that will be done by another disciple of his. A similar account is told regarding Sri Jivagoswami, the famous teacher of Gaudiyavaishnavism, who went to Madhusudanasarasvati to get a deep knowledge of Advaita with a view to set aside Advaita from the Vaishnava viewpoint. His *Shatsandarbha* and other works bear out his thorough knowledge of Advaita. But it is said that Sri Madhusudana accepted him also as a disciple and taught Advaita, although he knew the intention of this new disciple.

Our venerable saint was not only known for his great works but also as a great holy personality whose influence had some social consequence. Tradition records one interesting instance. In those days Hindu Sannyasins were often molested by Muslim Fakirs who were protected from mob-violence and Government interference by their privileged position. It is said that the Ganges became red with blood of victims on occasions. Their armed violence was never retaliated by Hindu Sannyasins who were under the vow of Ahimsa. This sad plight of the Hindu monks aggrieved Madhusudanasarasvati who made up his mind to take the matter to the great Moghul with whom he had some acquaintance as we have seen. During the interview with Akbar, Rajah Virbal was also present. To get out of the difficulty he suggested a plan; namely to admit

non-Brahmins to the order of Sannyasa and arm them so that they may defend the rest of the Sannyasins. On Madhusudana's agreeing to this suggestion, the Emperor undertook to see that they too were exempted from Government interference as they too were a religious group like the Fakirs. Thus came into existence the non-Brahmin order of Sannyasins in Northern India. The soldiers of Rajput kings were initiated into Sannyasa and thus an army of soldier-monks were created, who defended the country. These soldier-monks completely stopped the murder of Hindu monks at places of pilgrimage by Fakirs.⁹

From that time Madhusudanasarasvati became more familiar at the Emperor's Palace and it is said that he charmed him by his genius. The tradition recorded in the Introduction to the *Harililaviveka* suggests that the Pandits of the court were so amazed by Sri Madhusudana's erudition that one of them paid him the highest encomium. He certified that he was a man whose depth of learning could be gauged only by the Goddess of learning:

मधुसूदनसरस्वत्या: पारं वेति सरस्वती ।

The great Hindi poet and saint Tulasidas was another contemporary of Sri Madhusudana. His Ashrama, near Harischandraghat, was not far away from Gopal Math where Madhusudanasarasvati used to stay. The former had the highest reputation as a Bhakta and the latter as a Jnani. Tulasidas preached and wrote in Hindi, unlike the great scholars of

⁹ *Vide* Farquhar's article 'The Organization of the Sannyasins of Vedanta', *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, July, 1925.

his time who used Sanskrit as the medium of literary expression. When Tulasidas' devotees wanted to know the cause of his partiality to Hindi he replied them in a couplet:

हरि हर यश सुर नर गिरा वरणहि सन्त सुजान ।
हाण्डी हाटक चाहटिर रान्धे स्वाद समान ॥

meaning, as the food cooked in a golden pot or an earthen pot tastes equally well, so also the glories of God described by devotees in the language of gods or men are equally sweet. Some devotees who had a partiality for Sanskrit gave that couplet to Sri Madhusudana and asked for his opinion. Large-hearted Madhusudanasarasvati responded to this verse in a Sanskrit couplet:

परमानन्दपत्रोऽयं जङ्घमस्तुलसीतरुः ।
कवितामजरी यस्य रामध्रमरचुम्बिता ।

(This moving Tulasi plant has the leaf of supreme bliss; the efflorescence of it, in the form of poetry, is kissed by the bee, Rama). This high appreciation of the great Bhakta by the great Jnanin made the Pandits revere Tulasidas all the more.

The illustrious scholar and poet of South India, Appayadiikshita, who is also well-known as a great Advaitin, was a contemporary of Madhusudana. He had high regard for Madhusudana whom he met while he was at Benares.

Madhusudana writes¹⁰ at the end of his *Advaitasiddhi* a verse which means: 'It does not matter to me whether the author of this work is praised or blamed; for the idea of agency has been totally obliterated from his mind and he has realized his identity with Absolute Knowledge

without any trace of duality.' In Sri Madhusudana is found a rare combination of Jnana and Bhakti. As a Bhakta he says somewhere¹¹ in his works: 'I bow to Sri Krishna who is adored by all yogis and without having Bhakti to whom Mukti is not available.' This shows that he was a worshipper of Sri Krishna and that he believed that Mukti is impossible without Bhakti. Elsewhere¹² he says that he does not know of a truth higher than that of Sri Krishna the Personal God with form and attributes. In his commentary on the sixty-sixth verse of the last chapter of the *Gita* he says that there are three stages of Bhakti that come one after another as devotion deepens. The three¹³ stages are 'I am His', 'He is mine' and 'I am He'. This does not mean that like the orthodox Vaishnavas he believed that Bhakti is the fulfilment of Jnana; because in his commentary on the *Gita* (18, 55) he says that Bhakti is not the result of Jnana which rises after the fall of the body due to the proper working out of fructified Karmas.

Madhusudana was a great synthetic philosopher. At the end of his commentary on the fifteenth chapter of the *Gita* he says¹⁴ that he is one with that Ultimate Reality in Whom are merged all the worshippers of Siva, Durga, Vishnu, Surya, and Ganesha. He means thereby that all

10 यदभक्तिं न विना मुक्तिर्यः सेव्यः सर्वयोगिनाम्
तं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवं नन्दनन्दनम् ॥

11 कृष्णात् परं क्रिमपि तत्त्वमहं न जाने ।

12 तस्यैवाहं ममैवासौ स एवाहमिति तिथा ।

भगवच्छरणं स्थात् साधनाभ्यासपाक्तः ॥

14 शैवाः सौराश्व गाणेशाः वैष्णवाः शक्तिपूजकाः ।
भवन्ति यन्मयाः सर्वे सोहङ्गस्त्रिये परः शिवः ॥

10 ग्रन्थस्यैतस्य यः कर्ता स्त्युतां वा स निन्द्यताम् ।
मयि नास्येव कर्तृत्वमनन्यात्मुभवात्मनि ॥

the goddesses and gods are the manifestations and embodiments of one Brahman. In another place of his *Advaitasiddhi* he equates Brahman with Hari free from the three-fold differences of time and existence. When asked why he, an Advaitist worshipped Gopal, he confessed that though he was firmly established in the empire of Advaita, Gopal was his chosen Ideal. This is however no contradiction as we find the same in the life of Sri Sankaracharya and Sri Ramakrishna.

Madhusudana attained complete desirelessness, the highest ideal of monastic life. This is illustrated by the following incident. Once Goraknatha, the Guru of that Yogi sect, offered him a rare jewel while the former was returning to his monastery after a bath in the Ganges. Madhusudana modestly refused the offer but when Goraknatha pressed him hard to accept it he agreed to do so on condition that he would make use of it in whatever way he liked. No sooner Goraknatha had handed over the jewel to him than he threw it into the Ganges.

In old age Madhusudana accompanied by his disciples once paid a visit to Nabadvipa when his teacher of Nyaya, Mathuranatha was nearing the end of his life and Jagadisha (with whom he was acquainted in his student-life there and who was the greatest Naiyyayika after Mathuranatha) grew old and Gadadhara next to Jagadisha was like a rising sun spreading effulgence as a great logician. Madhusudana became a guest of Gadadhara at Nabadvipa and met all the learned logicians of the place. Jagadisha who was an advocate of Advaita showed high respects to him.

According to a tradition his visit was marked by great commotion. It is said¹⁵ that on the arrival of the great saint-scholar and philosopher Jagadisha became sleepless and Gadadhara lost balance.

When Madhusudana went to Mathuranatha the latter owing to defective sight caused by old age was writing a book holding it very close to his eyes. The former remarked¹⁶ at this: 'The arguments of logic only disturb the mind. Why are you occupied with them at such an advanced age?'. Mathuranatha replied¹⁷: 'Who can stay the will of the Lord.' From Nabadvipa Madhusudana went to Mithila now deprived of its former glories. After visiting other holy places on the way he reached Hardwar where he spent the last days of his life. He passed away probably in 1632 A.D. Hardwar being one of the Seven¹⁸ Tirths where Mukti is granted to all who die there, he wanted to leave the earthly life there. He intimated the exact time of his final departure to his disciples who were already prepared to accept the inevitable with stoic fortitude. In Brahma Muhurta the soul of Sri Madhusudana left the house of flesh on the banks of the Ganges and was merged in Brahman. The disciples consigned the body with due ceremonies to the holy waters of the Ganges.

¹⁵ नवद्वीपे समायाते मधुसूदनवाक्पती ।

अनीशो जगदीशोभूत् कातरोऽभूत् गदाधरः ॥

¹⁶ तर्कं कर्कशविचारनातुरी आकुलीभवति यत्र
किं तु रौयवयसा विभाव्यते ॥ [मानसष्ठ]

¹⁷ धातुरीपितमपाकरोति कः ।

¹⁸ The other six places of mukti are Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika and Puri.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Srimad Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya of Srimad Ananda Teertha with English translation and notes from the unpublished commentary of Sri Vadiraja Swamin. By B. Gururaja Rao, B.A., B.L., Retired Sub-Judge, Sarasvati Nivas, 2nd Cross Road, Visvesvarapuram, Bangalore. Price Rs. 2-0-0. Pages 269.

The present volume gives the first nine chapters of this well-known and important Dvaita text, consisting of 32 chapters in total. Although the text is generally lucid, there are places where it gives difficulty in understanding the author's meaning. The notes are therefore serviceable. The English rendering is lucid and faithful and will be found to be of much help to those who are desirous of grasping the thoughts presented in the original, but have not the necessary mastery of Sanskrit. The translator has done a good turn to the students of Madhva-Siddhanta and religious Hindus in general in bringing out this popular edition of an important manual of that school of religious thought. One can get an adequate knowledge of the philosophy, theology, and ethics of the system by a careful study of this one text in its entirety.

The first chapter describes the creation of the hierarchy of beings. Before the creation of this universe Narayana alone existed holding all sentient beings in his stomach with their consciousness suppressed. He brought forth into physical being various souls at the end of a Brahma's life-time for their benefit. They are completely dependant on Him. The motive of creation is His own amusement, the investment of the souls with bodies so that they may get joy or sorrow or a blend of them, as well as an opportunity for Hari to incarnate in various forms for His sport. The supreme Lord Hari is a repository of all excellences and is untainted by any defect natural to embodied beings; and even though he has a human form he is independant and devoid of any differentiation. He is

the summit of knowledge, power, strength, prowess, and mastery. The entire choir of beings celestial and mundane exist by his sufferance. The chapter presents the fundamental doctrines of the Madhva system of philosophy in a lucid and orderly manner—the status of various beings, nature and goal of souls, supremacy of Narayana, the various authorities for the obtainment of a correct and sure knowledge of reality, the method of reconciling contradictory texts and difference, gradation existing among all created things, the method of attaining God (the highest end of life) the nature of Guru and disciple, etc. Vishnu alone could grant liberation. To know Him, to love Him and to serve Him, is the purpose of life.

Even the bliss of release according to the text is not uniform; it varies with the original difference of each soul. Those who hate God are doomed to eternal suffering in the darkest hell. And under the head of hatred of God are catalogued: notion of identity of souls with God, believing that He is imperfect and is bereft of excellences, questioning His superiority over all, misunderstanding of His incarnation, hatred of His devotees, etc. (I: 113-116). The one condition of Divine grace is Bhakti and Bhakti alone is the cause of liberation which can be bestowed by Hari and none else. I: 118. (*Bhaktyai-va tushtir abhyeti vishnur nanyena kena chit; sa eva mukti-data cha bhaktis tatraiva karanam*)

Sri Madhva's definition of Bhakti is memorable: *Mahatmya-jnana-purvatsu sudridhah sarvato 'dhikah; sneho bhaktir iti proktas taya muktir na chanyatha.* (1.86)

Loving God more than everything else, knowing His greatness, is Bhakti; and that is the only thing that can confer liberation. Bhakti continues even after liberation (*Muktanam api bhaktir hi nityananda-svarupini* (1.106).

The Acharya easily gets over the difficulties often confronted in reconciling mutually opposing authorities

by cleanly assigning all of them to the limbo of delusive literature ordered by Hari to mislead the wicked.

The second chapter is a critical and didactic study of the core of the *Mahabharata* in the light of Dvaita system; for in the view of this sect the *Mahabharata* presents the essence and final word of all the scriptures. Sri Madhva stumbles upon the historico-critical principle of modern scholarship when he says (Chap. II: 3-7) that there has been interpolations, omissions, transpositions, variant lectionis, and great loss of the epic text. The present work as the title speaks loudly is an attempt to interpret the real esoteric purport of the great epic. The Acharya here exalts might above all other virtues. 'Among the Devas, only those that are strong have devotion and wisdom, and not others. Only such a person (having devotion and wisdom) is beloved of Vishnu and not otherwise under any circumstances. Therefore he who is great in strength is necessarily great in character' (II: 19, 20). Hence Bhima naturally occupies a central position in the *Mahabharata*.

There is an English proverb, which says, 'Beauty without virtue is a curse'. Evidently beauty here means only physical handsomeness. Madhvacharya however is of opinion '*yatra rupam tatra gunah*' II: 37. 'Generally it is not possible', he says 'even by effort to find out the qualities like devotion, etc., in women; therefore it is settled that those who have beautiful form have also qualities like devotion etc.' (See verses II: 37-39.) However he adds that beauty must be accompanied by 32 *lakshanas*, marks, to produce the predicted effect. This chapter contains several important and charming verses which convey the devotional and ethical ideals of Dvaita.

In the third chapter Sri Madhva declares himself to be the third incarnation of Vayu. (verse 9.) The most fundamental doctrines of the system are lucidly present here. (See verses 34-39.) The creation of the

higher order of beings also find a prominent place.

Chapters IV to IX describe the story of Sri Rama with a vigour of diction, charm of style and grasp of inner significance peculiar to the great mind of the Acharya. For the most part it reads like an excellent Kavya. The chapters are interspersed with pithy sayings such as: *Prayah svā-kārye pratipadite hi madoddhata na pratikartum ihatे*, VI: 29. In vocabulary he is not chary of using *apaniniya* usages such as *darsayana* (VI: 8). Nor was he punctilious about the metre. (See IX: 8 & IX: 48.) He also deviates from Valmiki in minor details of the story to serve his own purpose. The last chapter closes with the attainment of Rama to his imperishable abode. Every one, down to the ant, received Rama's call to go to His supreme abode to which He was returning after the purpose of the incarnation was over. Even ants were allowed and grass and the like got the power to walk, (VI: 61) by his command; but those that were destined to live long on earth did not wish to avail of that opportunity.

The work is full of importance and interest from various points of view and we hope the translator will soon bring out the remaining chapters in the same fashion. A little more attention bestowed on printing would have still enhanced the value of this publication. We congratulate the translator for the service he has done to the English-reading public by bringing out this valuable work in modern form.

Mukundamala: Published by B. G. Paul & Co., Madras. Price As. 4. Pages 50.

This book contains the text of the soul-stirring and deservedly famous devotional lyric of forty-five verses printed in Devanagari characters and a sweet Tamil translation and some useful notes by Sahiti-vallabha T. Sundarachariar, B.A., B.L. Bhaktas of Tamil-land have here a book of great value for a small cost.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The following is a letter received from Swami Siddheswarananda about a couple of months ago from Montpellier. The letter is dated June 19, 1941:

I am very glad to learn that you are all doing well. J. N.—, in one of his letters that came here after six months after posting, told me that you had also written to me; and since such a long time I had no direct news of you, I sent a reply pre-paid telegram. Now I feel much at ease knowing that you are all doing well. The cable that you sent last year to M. H.— was duly delivered to me. Since then almost every month . . . I have been cabling . . . In September last from Foix I had sent you a letter.

It was the intuition of M. H.— that made us leave Paris precipitately. In far-off corner of Paris, in St. Mandé, we were lost in our work and the outside world was almost dead to us. We were busy with our lectures and classes and only when M. H.— purchased our tickets to Guethary near Biarritz we made up our minds to go; and now we find that if we had delayed we would not have been able to leave the city, and with all other Indians, I also would have been in a prison. When M. S.— came to the Station to see us off to Guethary we had little hopes of meeting again. He remained ten more days at Paris. He left with the other employees of the Firm where he works and came up to . . . when the Armistice was declared. He then got back to Paris and we had no chance of meeting him then. Our exit from Guethary which became an occupied zone soon was equally dramatic and it would require pages for me to describe all that. M. H.— who came to us made all arrangements for us and we were received by the R.— family from July 7, 1940. The R.— family is only second to the S.—s in their devotion and complete dedication for the cause of Sri Gurumaharaj. Soon they rented for us the upper storey of their house and we were receiving

all their hospitality. We stayed there till the 20th of September. I was thinking that Montpellier would be a nice place for work. It possesses the most ancient University in France and we thought, being in the south of France, the winter may not be severe. The Chief Judge of the Appellate Court in Montpellier had come to meet me in 1939 when I was at Foix, and he also was wishing that we should come over here. He facilitated much for our coming in, offering his own well-furnished apartments as he was living in the suburbs of the City. That was a great saving for us in view of the complete blocking of all my accounts in the Paris Bank and the difficulty to receive aid from our students in America. M. H.— had given me some 30,000 frs., on leaving Guethary, as a sum to be used in emergency. Living conditions had gone up very very high. And so we came to Montpellier with all the love and care the R.—s had heaped on us during the two months' stay at Foix.

Monsieur Loup, the Chief Judge received us with all warmth and we installed ourselves in his nice apartments. If this offer had not come it would have been impossible even to get lodging in a rented apartment. Montpellier which had a lakh of inhabitants has another two lakhs more of population owing to the exodus caused by the war. People were sleeping in streets and there was so much difficulty to get food. Hardly we installed ourselves here I fell ill. Being near the sea and lagooned areas around, this place has a lot of mosquitoes; and getting their bites while sleeping germs of malaria became active and I was getting fever. . . . One of the saving things in remaining in a war-infected Europe and working under odds, is the possibility to see such heartfelt dedication to the cause of Sri Gurumaharaj in people like the S.—s, the R.—s and others. The S.—s have given their all, and it was their unique devotion that made it possible for

me to work here these three-and-a-half years. . . .

A nice batch of students were ready to follow my course on Vedanta. First we started our classes here, and in December were invited to have the classes in a good hall. And since then I have been regularly giving my lectures once a week. We have now here a good group of 60 to 70 people and most of them are drawn from the University. Some of the professors are regularly coming to hear the discourses. To our great joy M. S.— came here on the 9th of February, and even with his very bad health he has been regularly taking down the lectures and they are now given to the Printer. M. S.— came with a permission for 15 days To me M. S.— is the right hand of our work here. Such complete self-denial and assiduous application for work I have rarely seen. His physical suffering is intense; but without caring for all that he spends the whole day in editing my lectures, taking them down and preparing them for the press.

As soon as the lectures came out from the press we go to spend the summer vacation at Foix in the Pyrennes. The R.—s are anxiously waiting for us. We had in the course of this year three fine celebrations. First there was the birthday anniversary celebrations of Sri Gurumaharaj and Swamiji and then we had a day for Lord Buddha and ten days back we had a day for Sri Sankaracharya. Montpellier has a wonderful University atmosphere. The University dates from the 13th century. Its faculty of medicine has a very wide reputation. Last month I had been to Nimes, a neighbouring town. It is called the Rome of France. It was a well-known Roman centre in the time of the Caesars. And the place and the many ruins remind one of Rome. I gave a lecture in that place and if next year I have to stay here I will have to go there often to give lectures. A group from Mar-

scilles also is inviting me and I may be soon going over there.

Monsieur Loup, the Chief Judge (whom they address here as *President de la chambre de cour D'appel*) is a charming type of man. To live in his house is a great protection. He comes here every day. The other day in March, a son was born to him. He invited me one day to bless the child. A small Shrine was dedicated and I made a little worship and repeating Sri Gurumaharaj's name touching the child offered many flowers to the Lord. Then we repeated prayers to Lord Buddha and to Jesus.

It was a very agreeable surprise for me to discover that the famous surgeon who operated M-e. S.— is a great admirer of Sri Gurumaharaj. He is called Prof. Etienne—the title professor in the medical faculty is given only to those who take a very high place in competitive examinations held in France to select professors for the faculty of medicine. A few days after the operation of M-e. S.— when I was introduced to him as a member of the Order, his surprise and joy were visible. He had been for the past four years influenced by the life of Sri Gurumaharaj written by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Since then he had become almost a propagandist in presenting the book to his friends. He is an ardent protestant. He takes pleasure in reading the course I give and once he came to have some instructions in meditation according to our Indian methods. I consider it a great blessing of Sri Gurumaharaj to have been permitted to work during these days when there are so many restrictions on speaking. I can even say that this year's work here has given us more satisfaction than the previous year's in Paris. For here we touch a strata that is uniquely *Universitaire*. As some friends remarked, our classes have become an annexe to the University. The professor in charge of Philosophy and other professors in the different colleges here feel it a great chance that the French people

get through the lectures on Vedanta, a perspective of the Indian Philosophy. Because of these remarks, I felt impelled in one of my cables to congratulate Mr. V. S.— who it was that introduced me to the modern way of thinking. I have been carefully reading through the *Sankara Bhashyas* on the *Upanishads* and the *Sutras* and the *Gita* and the more I study them in the light of the philosophical outlook inculcated by Mr. V. S.— the more I feel how much India has to contribute to the development of real philosophy. We have the teachings of Sri Gurumaharaj and Swamiji which make that philosophical system of Sankara extremely practical and wonderfully refreshing in their modernity. I do not attempt to give popular lectures (they are often difficult) and I do not attempt to get up an audience; even as such the Indian way of philosophical approach is extremely difficult, and I feel I would have done a part of the dream Mr. V. S.— had of me if I succeed in presenting Vedanta amongst the University minds and make Vedanta penetrate the intellectual milieu. Amongst the little circle that I had worked in Paris and here, people who represent philosophy have begun to note that they have many misunderstandings regarding Vedanta. Monsieur Masson-Oursel, Professor in Paris University at Sorbonne, has definitely expressed that change in an introduction he has given me for our French edition of *Drik-drisyaviveka*. In Mon. Oursel's book on Indian philosophy Prof. Brehier, the Head of the Philosophy Department of the Paris University, had contributed a preface where he states that there is no really philosophical thinking in India except that of theology and huge logical constructions which cannot be compared to European Philosophy with its Greco-Roman heritage. I was closely following the lectures of Prof. Masson-Oursel and Brehier at the University; they were equally following the printed weekly lectures I was giving. And in giving his preface Mr. Masson-Oursel has

categorically admitted that Sankara's system possesses a philosophical approach as deep and powerful that Europe saw in the Philosophy of Spinoza. In that preface one can note the Professor's change of attitude. In a way he has withdrawn the dogmatic assertions he and Prof. Brehier had made, and accepted the dignity of Indian philosophy. Brehier himself told me that they had not made any study of Indian philosophy. In this year's course I have developed in four or five lectures the full implications of the philosophy of Avasthatriya and compared it with the Adhyaropa-apavada method (which is the only thing Europe knows). I have then explained the concept of Turiya as a philosophical position and harmonized it with the religious experience. Some lectures were devoted to explain *Drik-drisyaviveka*, Sri Sankara's exposition of portions of the *Gita* and the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. The concept of Sakshi given in the Brih. Upd. the concept of Dharma and Purushartha and the different religious ideas of God, reincarnation, etc., were also explained. A number of lectures on the practice of meditation, and another course of lectures on the basis of morality in Vedanta ended the year's series. I had in mind to develop in another series of discourses the test of Truth in Vedanta, the implications of Causality leading to the exposition of the Ajatavada of Gaudapada. For lack of time I have postponed it for next year. Mon. S.— has almost finished translating the *Mandukya Upanishad* with the Karika of Gaudapada and the commentary of Sri Sankara. . . . I would like Mr. V. S.— to explain there and harmonize the apparently conflicting opinion of Sankara regarding placing Pratibhasika Satta and Vyavaharika Satta on the same plane with the other opinion of Sri Sankara as held in *Sutrabhashya* (II: 2-29). In the four lectures I gave on 'A Working Basis for a Philosophy of Totality' I have explained it in the way he taught us

at Mysore basing the argument on Mandukya Karika. But I would like to have it in his own words as introduction. . . . Vedanta alone can give a true basis for a correct theory of knowledge based on Upanishadic teaching—‘That shining, everything shines’. The experience of Turiya which alone can give *Jnana* is only consciously finding the silent that separates the ideas,—ideas working, according to Gaudapada, in single *kala* as thoughts and ideas and working in *dvikala* as matter. This way of analysing experience alone can explain time, space, causality in empirical life. All these have been dealt with impersonally. People are extremely interested, especially philosophical circles, about the implications of these positions, as Europe wants to know the development of pure philosophy in Vedanta, and not interpretations and commentaries of theological positions. The psychological and epistemological positions of Vedanta have great future in the West. In spite of these very new grounds covered and the abstruse nature of the subjects dealt with, there was a regular attendance. The head of the philosophical department of the University has told me that he will carefully study the positions expounded during my lectures of this year. The comparative ease with which I could express myself in French has equally helped me. It may interest Mr. V. S.— to know that besides the professors and students of philosophy who attended the class, there was a very noted personality of France in the class, Doctor Allendy. He is the best authority in Psycho-analysis and has written many books on the subject. He comes regularly to all classes.

We have been able to preserve these lectures, except the first ten of this year, because of Mon. S.—. He took them verbatim and has edited them into excellent French. As owing to the war we could not retype them, we had to think of printing them for circulation amongst students.

As I have very much more to develop each subject, before sending them out as a book, we do not call this publication a book. You can imagine the interest in the subject, that hardly we announced its publication and the estimated price of printing as 10000 francs we got much more than that as some 140000 francs have come in for its publication. It was painful for me to see Mon. S.—working at the lectures so much in spite of his bad health; I had to permit him to work as that was the only consolation for him in his physical sufferings.

In spite of extreme difficulties to live, we are somehow working on and managing to live. Here everything is difficult to get; practically no foodstuffs are available for the past one year. We have extreme famine conditions. Nothing can be got without regulation tickets given by the Municipality. A small quantity of gas is allowed for the kitchen. I who have been accustomed to bathe twice a day in Paris can have only a single bath a week! . . . But the possibility to work and meet real devotees have made up for all difficulties. . . . But the idea that we should serve Sri Gurumaharaj under thick and thin inspired me to accept all the possible tribulations the present condition of living imposes on all. The all merciful Lord has cheered me with bright fields of work and in meeting a very interesting group of aspiring souls. Subjectively, this life has helped me to be much more introspective than I ever was, I spent hours in useful communion with spiritual thoughts, scriptural studies, and *sat-sangam*; and even *seva* of patients. . . . The idea of working in Europe should not be associated with all the comforts one thinks of in Western countries. But Sri Gurumaharaj has equally devotees here as in India, . . . and these will see that his children who come here have at least the wherewithal to live. I feel constantly the protecting power of . . . Sri Gurumaharaj.

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THE ADVAITA THEORY OF MAYA

By N. S.

It is impossible to have a clear conception of Maya which is admittedly inconceivable. But philosophy as a method of resolute thinking on all things demands an explanation even of the Maya theory. There is however no royal road to a clear and consistent view of what is logically indefinable. One method of explaining it is to consider it from three standpoints: *viz.*, the practical, the metaphysical and the transcendental. They form three ascending stages of understanding. In the first stage, Maya refers to the wonders of existence and experience and philosophy truly begins with wonder. In the second stage it refers to the fact of the self-contradictions of experience and it is the object of philosophy to show

the bankruptcy of thought by bringing out the confusions of the thinking process. In the third stage Maya is sublated, and when Maya is naught all problems cease.

To get an idea of the first stage we may take advantage of Sankara's admission of the three kinds of reality including the *vycavaharika satta* or phenomenal reality. The whole process of *srishti* is ever-changing owing to the law of *parinama*. Brahman as the support of Maya is the cause of all cosmic changes. When we reflect upon this *Mayasakti* of Brahman we are filled with amazement and wonder. After every cosmic process or *srishti* there is *pralaya* and the two go on endlessly in amazing succession. Even in *srishti* itself every phenomenon is a real change

and things alter at every turn of events. Nothing in the Nature *is*, but everything becomes. The body is subject to birth, growth, disease and death. On the mental plane also the law of change rules. Mental modifications arise and disappear the next moment. Life itself lives upon death and even the so-called pleasures of life are but momentary and pass away like perfume. The moral world also is infected with inconsistency. There is really no moral order at all as very often the wicked roll in wealth while the virtuous are sunk in sorrow. Every laughter is fraught with pain, and life itself is absurdity in action. Man is regarded as the pillar of the universe, the cream of creation, but is yet a puny thing. He is like a reed in a rushing torrent. Things change fast, time flies and life is fleeting. Yet something invests life with a semblance of permanence. When we reflect on the wonder of Nature and the passing shows of life we realise the wonderful *maya-sakti* that is Brahman and are staggered by its inscrutable working.

A further reflection on the nature of Maya leads us to the second stage in which we realise its self-contradiction and mystery. The concept of ceaseless becoming

cannot be reconciled with that of being. We do not know how the absolute and the unchanging becomes the finite and the fleeting. The relation between Brahman, the changeless and the real, and the world, the changing and the unreal, cannot be logically established. How Brahman and Maya co-exist becomes a riddle of thought, like the rope appearing as the snake. The things arising from Maya are neither real nor unreal. They are not real as they disappear in the state of true Brahmajnana. Yet they are now felt to be real. Therefore they cannot be explained in terms of the law of excluded middle. Maya in this stage, therefore, occupies an intermediate place ; it being what is real and unreal. Hence it is often said to be *anirvachaniya*. When we thus reflect on the self-contradictions of life we are logically unable to explain the phenomenon of life. In Brahmajnana the absolute is realised ; but the contradictions of life are there and philosophy fails to explain it. There is an utter bankruptcy of thought itself.

But when we ascend to the higher stage we go from the world of illusion to that of disillusionment and Brahmajnana. In this stage there is really no problem whether Maya is legitimate

or illegitimate. All contradictions are sublated and Maya dissolves itself into knowledge. To the *Jnani* Brahman alone exists as the infinite consciousness and bliss and the world is no longer felt to be real or unreal. It is simply non-existent. Every trace of dual consciousness is swallowed up in the experience of the

absolute. Brahman is ever existent and *ajati* and the world is non-existent, like the square-circle. This is the highest stage of Advaita and when it is realised there is no problem of reality or realisation. Brahman simply *is* and the world is naught. All *isms* disappear, illusions vanish and Advaita is ever self-explained.

WHAT A SADHAKA OUGHT TO DO WITH HIMSELF

By Swami Yatiswarananda

CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

Without previously having attained to a certain amount of sublimation and purification of our feelings and desires, concentration becomes very dangerous in the case of persons who have not prepared themselves properly for the higher life. It may lead to very bad effects. In a way, we all make the mind concentrated, but then we do not know how to manipulate it. This concentrated mind will run after sensual enjoyments and all kinds of worldly distractions and objects with a greater intensity for having become concentrated. So if we do not know how to handle it in the right way, it becomes a great danger. It is far better not to have concentration if one does not attain sublimation and purification

at the same time. Therefore the necessity of purity, of non-injury, truthfulness, continence, etc., in thought, word and deed, has to be stressed very much. Without sublimation of all our desires and feelings we cannot progress in the spiritual path. It is after we have followed a strict code of ethics and morals that we should attempt concentration and meditation. The concentrated mind, if it is not purified becomes a veritable demon and creates untold troubles for the spiritual aspirant.

The concentration of a worldly man on his gross material gain, profit and enjoyment; the concentration of the scientist on his experiments, for instance on the structure of the atom or the

constitution of the plant ; the concentration of the psychologist on the movement and laws of thought ; the concentration of the Yogi on the analysis of the ego and the non-ego—all these are but different forms of concentration, judged from the objective standpoint. But considered from the subjective point of view their contents differ very widely, and they lead to altogether different experiences and results.

The yogic seeker after Truth, having no faith in God as ordinarily understood, may begin with the concentration and meditation on gross elements associated with time and space, and then take the elements beyond the limitations of time and space. He may next take up the subtle elements as the objects of his concentration and meditation, at first within time and space, and later on beyond their limits. Proceeding further, he may first make the mind the 'inner organ' and afterwards the ego, the object of this concentration and meditation. And knowing the true nature of these objects he ceases to identify himself with these limiting adjuncts, and having come nearer to his self he enjoys a wonderful state of bliss and illumination.

The Vedantic aspirant who believes in the existence of

the Divine, may at the beginning meditate on the physical form of some great holy personality, image or picture or symbolic representation of the Divine, first associated with time and space, and then without these limitations. Advancing further, he may meditate on the 'heart' of the holy personality or on the Divine Mind, and gradually imbibe the noble attributes associated with it. Later, he may pass on to Pure Consciousness, individual or cosmic, and thereby succeed in purifying and expanding his impure, limited consciousness, come in touch with the Infinite Being within his self, and even proceed to the highest Divine Realisation in which the meditator, like a salt-doll coming in contact with the ocean, gets merged into the Absolute Divine Principle. Thus beginning with different forms of concentration and meditation associated with individualised consciousness, he may reach the highest Superconsciousness—the Absolute Reality, the One Undivided Principle—in which all subject-object relationship, nay, all relativity is completely transcended.

By themselves concentration and meditation may not have any spiritual value. As already said, they may even be dangerous if the person

who practises them has not already attained a certain amount of mental purification and does not continue the process of sublimation at the same time. Concentration and meditation become spiritually effective to the extent to which the mind is purified of its dross, of all the dirt, the filth and bad impressions and tendencies it has been allowed to accumulate through successive evil thoughts and actions. With the attainment of great dispassion and purity alone can the aspirant take up successfully the higher forms of concentration and meditation, ultimately leading to the highest Divine experience and freedom.

THE GODWARD TURN

Every average person has the capacity to practise concentration and meditation, although these are usually directed towards persons or objects of gain and enjoyment presented to us by the world. In order to follow the spiritual life, no new faculties need be created all of a sudden. To old capacities and tendencies are to be given a Godward turn without diminishing their intensity, and then the worldly man is transformed into a spiritual man. So the true devotee prays, 'Lord, may I think of Thee with that strong love which the igno-

rant cherish for the things of the world, and may that love never cease to abide in my heart.'

The ego asserts itself again and again. So says Sri Rama-krishna. make it the servant of the Lord. Desires and passions refuse to be controlled. Give a Godward turn to them, maintaining their intensity, so advises the spiritual teacher. Instead of yearning for the company of men and women, yearn for union with the Divine. See Him in all, but take care that you do not cheat yourself. He alone can satisfy the hunger of the soul. He alone can fill its void and give it permanent peace and joy.

Instead of being angry with those standing in the way of your sense-enjoyment, gross or subtle, be angry with all the obstacles lying in the path to the Divine. Learn to be angry with your lower desires, with your turbulent passions, with your very anger and avoid them all as your great and relentless enemies. Instead of wishing to possess another 'human doll' or fleeting worldly wealth, covet the Divine and His inexhaustible wealth which can never be lost and is alone able to give abiding peace. So says the *Bhagavatam*: 'Lust, anger, fear, affections, fellowship and friendship, when

directed towards the Divine Being, lead to union with the Divine.'

At the touch of the philosopher's stone all the base metals of desires and passions, of greed and anger, lose their evil nature and are transmuted into pure devotion bringing Bliss and Immortality to the soul. 'Even if the very wicked worships Me,— the Divine,— with devotion to none else, he should be regarded as good, for he has rightly resolved. Soon does he become righteous and obtain eternal peace. Boldly canst thou proclaim that my devotee never comes to grief,' says the *Bhagavadgita*.

Time and again Sri Ramakrishna says, 'Give a Godward turn to all your tendencies'. Especially in the path of devotion all desires and passions should be consciously given a higher direction without allowing them to decrease in intensity.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-PURIFICATION

Let us take, e.g., the question of anger. Why are we angry? Only because some one or something is standing in the way of what we think to be the object of our enjoyment. This is the only reason for all our anger. Always we find that anger is closely connected with the overstressed ego or a strong sense of per-

sonality, and without this strong sense of the ego and an inordinate desire for enjoyment, physical and mental, anger could never even rise in our hearts. So this ego, this desire of enjoyment, is the only cause of our becoming angry. If we do not desire any enjoyment, if we do not expect anything from anybody, but just give and act without ever expecting any return, there can never be any rise of anger. So we should get angry with our anger and not with others. We should get terribly angry with our desires for sense-enjoyment and not with the objects as such. This is the only practical way to uproot anger and eventually eliminate it. And without eliminating anger and other associated evils to a great extent, we can never make any progress in spiritual life. Lust and anger are the two greatest enemies in the spiritual path. So they should be carefully avoided by all aspirants.

Thus, whenever there is anger there is some attachment or other, some inordinate desire or affection, for, truly speaking, without attachment to some person or thing there can never rise any form of anger. It is only our thwarted will to enjoyment that brings about anger. But this should be understood more in a subtle sense than

in a gross one. It need not necessarily be any craving for the grosser forms of enjoyment that lies as the root-cause of anger.

It may happen that a person is fully convinced of the evil effects of desires, but still is not able to rid himself completely of them. What is such a person to do? How can he rise above them? He should connect them all, directly or indirectly, with the Divine, give every desire, every sensual impulse, every passion a Godward turn consciously and knowingly, with an effort of the will. If he cannot rid himself of the inordinate desire for music, let him listen to devotional, holy music, and all the time he is so doing, let him think of the Divine. If his artistic sense and his desire to enjoy art are very strong, he should take up some holy form of art and make that a stepping-stone for rising to the plane of the Divine. If he is very fond of the sweet fragrance and beauty of flowers and wishes to enjoy them, let him pluck the flowers, offer them to the Divine and decorate the holy altar artistically with them. If he desires to love somebody, feel greatly attracted towards somebody, let him love the Divine in that person and be thereby directly drawn towards the Divine. If done consciously

and knowingly, all this acts as a great controlling factor as a great regulating agency, helping us in sublimating our desires and in giving them a higher and higher turn and attaining a greater and greater purity. But even here the ultimate goal to be attained by the aspirant is perfect control and Divine Realisation. Everything else serves only as a stepping-stone to that. Following the graduated steps we must be able to rise to the Highest sooner or later.

Unless all the filth and foulness which have gathered in the mind are removed from it, from all nooks and corners, our problem is not really solved. If some light just enters a room through a chink in the door and the rest of the room remains shrouded in darkness and continues to be dirty, nothing is achieved. There is no real spiritual illumination if just a tiny bit of light enters our mind and all the dirt and filth lying there is pushed away for the time being into some far-off dark-corner. In such a case the man remains just what he was before he had this kind of 'glimpse'. Mere theories and philosophies do not help us in any way, however wonderful they may be. What is essential is the practical application, the sublimation, the

removal of all the dirt lying hidden in the dark corners of the mind, not the so-called perfect control of all the mental modifications (*vrittis*) as some people would have it, which only leads to self-induced sleep in the beginner, but not to any form of real illumination. People talking of the complete stopping of all the mental modifications (*vrittis*) at the very beginning of their spiritual life do not know what they mean.

Very often there is in us only a certain amount of external control, but as distinct from this there should be real internal control. If we are outwardly controlled, but are not able to stop the activity in the sense-organ or in the mind, we can attain to higher forms of control. If the senses have been controlled, but are still eager to come in touch with the sense-objects, real control has not been achieved, but only its outward form. Even then a step has been taken in the right direction.

One form of control is to draw oneself away completely from the objects of the senses. Another form is to allow the senses to come in touch with things that are pure and not likely to harm the aspirant by rousing fresh desires in him. This is the better and easier method for most people.

'O my mind worship the Mother and repeat day and night the great *Mantram* (the mystic word) that you have received from your Guru. When you lie down, think you are making prostrations to the Mother. When you sleep, think you are meditating on Her. When you eat, think you are offering food to Her. With great joy Ram-prasad proclaims, "Mother dwells in all bodies. When you walk in the city, think you are going round the Mother Divine."

The idea of this beautiful song is this:—To connect consciously every thought and every single act of our life either directly or indirectly with the Divine, to practise the Presence of God at all times.

RECOGNITION OF THE ALL-PERVADING DIVINE PRINCIPLE.

The Divine is everywhere and in everything, but we should learn to discriminate and act accordingly. We should learn to become more wide-awake and conscious. We should be more reflective and act less on the impulse of the senses and of our instincts, be they good or bad. We are so careless and easy-going in all this, that we follow the opposite course and bring no end to troubles on ourselves. .

We should fully recognise this idea of Unity but in the right way. At present we recognise it so half-heartedly. And properly speaking, without acquiring true dispassion and detachment we cannot recognise it whole-heartedly and act up to it. If we were convinced that the One Undivided Principle exists in all, we could not have any strong hatred or any strong animal love for anybody, separating him from the rest, but would only turn our eyes towards the principle at the back of him. This does not mean that we are to behave like fools. No. We still should know the tiger to be a tiger, in spite of its being a manifestation of this One Undivided Principle. So we should not go and shake hands with it. We should know the Principle to be present both in man and woman, but this knowledge should not prevent us from discriminating and being careful so long as we are on this phenomenal plane. We should see the One Principle at the back of the worldly person leading an impure and immoral life, but we should not go and have intimate talks with him. This is very, very essential. And if we do not act up to this rule, our feet will slip one day, and we shall seriously come to grief. The aspi-

rant can never be careful enough in this. To the extent that we recognise the One Undivided Principle in all, our hatred, our so-called human love, our attachment, would be diminished and lose all strength and influence. Wherever we find in an aspirant the desire to mix indiscriminately with worldly-minded people and with members of the opposite sex, there is something seriously wrong. His desires for worldly things and enjoyment have not yet lost their tenacity and no purification has been attained. So spiritual progress and realisation are altogether out of question.

Ordinarily our attachment clouds our whole understanding. We must be able to stress the spirit more than the form, more than the personalities and sense-objects, but so long as our craving for sense-enjoyment, our clinging to this little personality of ours, continues to cloud our understanding, we can never really think of this One Undivided Principle, and thus we go on committing the same old mistakes over and over again. So dispassion should be cultivated as much as possible by all aspirants. Without it nothing positive can be achieved.

THE WAY TO DIVINE
REALISATION—THE HIGHEST
GOAL OF LIFE

Christ says, 'He who loves father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.' And that is perfectly true. But not only that, but also he who allows another to love him more than the Divine is not worthy of God. He who allows another to be more attracted by him than by the Divine is not worthy of God and cannot attain Him. When we make another person love us in such a way by not being sufficiently reserved, we are not worthy of God. So, in this, too, we should be very careful and wide-awake. We feel flattered, no doubt, we like being attractive to others, we like being loved by others as objects of enjoyment. But we are too impulsive and too unreflective to know that from the spiritual standpoint we create troubles both for ourselves and for others and prevent our progress. We should be dignified and well guarded. We should take such an attitude that others do not dare to approach us in a wrong way. In short, we should try to possess greater and greater discrimination.

Dispassion has both its negative and its positive aspect. We should try to disconnect ourselves from others as much as possible

and then connect ourselves with the Divine, so that later on all connection with others can be done only through the Divine, but never again in a direct way. Human love connected with the Divine can be gradually transmuted, but if it is not so connected, it degenerates and always ends in disaster and misery, whatever we may think to the contrary. All our relationships, if they be direct relationships, are only born with the body and associated with others through connections of the body only. There is nothing lasting in them that could ever bring peace and real blessedness to any of us.

It is really very strange that people suffer so much and still they are not brought to their senses, but cling to all these false identifications. Very often we forget the goal and take the means to be the goal. The whole world is bound by the desire for wealth and by the desire for sex. But we should learn to develop a new attitude towards both. We make money the highest goal of our life, and then we come to grief. We make the love of a man or a woman the ultimate aim of our life, and end our life in misery. We should become introspective and know what is the real goal of life and then try to realise it.

Ordinarily there is in us such an awful identification with our body and our senses and passions that we just brush aside God. Wherever there is scepticism with reference to the Divine, there is some inordinate clinging to the self and to the senses and their objects, because of which God is pushed out. So long as the individual is full of sense-enjoyment, desire for possession, of egoism and vanity, God has no place in his life. The Divine is pushed away by our creature-consciousness. If the mind becomes perfectly free from desires and passions, one realises the Divine then and there. So if we do not realise God, if we do not even get a glimpse of the Truth, we need not ask why it is so. We should know that in the conscious and in the subconscious mind there are still strong desires in us, and we should first rid ourselves of these obstructions. So long as we allow them to remain, the question of realisation does not even arise.

We should break the sway of our impulses over us. The very moment the impulses rise in us, we should try to expand ourselves, for then these impulses at once dis-

appear just as the waves disappear in the ocean. The man who knows how to expand his consciousness, how to attain a higher form of consciousness, is not affected by such impulses that rise in the mind. One of the most effective means to rise above one's impulses is to come in touch with the Divine Consciousness, with that Infinite Presence which is always in us. And without knowing how to rise above our instincts, without knowing how to control and curb our passions and cultivating true renunciation and dispassion, without having tried to attain to the purity of mind and of body, there can be no spiritual life for anyone. So we should become more reflective and more discriminating. We are not consistent enough in our thinking and in our actions. There should never be any haziness in the Vedantic aspirant. Vagueness and indefiniteness have no place in true spiritual life. Everything should be clear. We must have definite and right thoughts definite and right emotions and feelings, definite and right actions. Then alone can we proceed to the Divine Goal and realise it.

"The joy of understanding is a sad joy ; yet those who have once tasted it would not exchange it for all the frivolous gaieties and empty hope of the vulgar herd."—Schopenhauer.

CAUSALITY AND VEDANTA

By C. T. Srinivasan, M.A.

Nature appears to contain opposites but is contained by neither. In its unceasing movements it transcends and annuls them. Here Idealism offers magnanimously to exalt everything to the rank of mind, and Materialism graduating itself into Realism, threatens invidiously to degrade everything to the level of the inorganic stuff. Reality has however brought man on the terrestrial stage, has determined his environment, has given him his equipment for life and nursed him through long hours of infancy. But does it promise also continuous direction of his career? Does the cosmos indicate the plan and method of future development? It will doubtless be comforting could we be assured that the universe deals with man according to strict standards of value. But this statement meets the refutation of hard experience. The cosmic struggle for survival has too often been, what Huxley called it, 'the gladiatorial theory of existence.' Anything that can be reduced to a method, can also be reduced to machinery. The popular teleological evolution, in the words of Mary Whiton Calkins, in which man appears at the top of the

ladder which other organisms are trying to mount, is a romantic vanity. It is equally legitimate to describe it as a successful attempt to attain death. Man's life on this planet is a unique phenomenon in the universe; and he will in vain consult the stars or the heavens above to chart his course. If he thinks to find patterns and premeditated plans 'there' for what should be 'here', he sees only visions which his own thought and imagination have created. Thought roams far afield but there is always a home-coming where account must be taken of the human significance of the journey. Do cause and purpose that are supposed to be active in the realm of nature really signify anything more than a way of human reckoning in the final?

Cause is generally taken to denote a previous condition. It is impossible in this way to arrive at the First Condition, as it is impossible to arrive at the first hour of existence. An event in time presupposes its previous condition only. We do not light upon anything as the exact cause of any event, in the current sense of the term. Vedanta may prove emphatically that cause is unreal. Still the human cra-

ving for knowledge of this world continues. The several antecedant conditions taken as the causes, are found to be one with the present, and the imaginary breaks in the continuity of the empirical phenomena are only the different views of the One Great Event (if event it can be called) that is beginningless. Those that have an eye on the result of knowledge, may assure us that it has an end. They say 'it ends by knowledge'. Philosophy is a poor thing if it end its task with a proposition. The world does not disappear with knowledge. The cosmos viewed as a whole does not seem to have come into existence or likely to disappear at any distant time. Even if it is proved to be an illusion, the illusion continues without a purpose, for purpose has an end in view. The idea of the world as an independent reality, a second entity, may collapse in 'our' view. But the proof of its unreality does not erase it from existence. Its disappearance is therefore purely metaphysical—not even mental. The mystics may see a blank, but it does not help us in any way. When fancies overpower reason, human mind delights in individual illusions or forgets itself in honest hallucinations. We are not concerned with these psychological cases. The world continues

(to appear) as long as we are 'awake.' The cause of it, if we mean it as a previous condition, must be included within that beginningless continuity. Therefore cause, if it means a previous condition or combination of circumstances, has no meaning in philosophy. For purposes of elementary knowledge of science sun's heat might be pointed out as the 'cause' of rain. The question, 'How this heat causes rain?', would be answered by pointing out certain other facts connected with the event...But no 'cause' is got at ! Cause may also be taken to mean motive or purpose. This is the Philosophic field. The question, 'how', implies the 'why', and the 'why' presupposes the 'who'. The 'how' is only the way of it and it need not engage our attention. What is the motive behind this universe which we call as a creation? Even an illusion must be accounted for. That is the nature of mind. Why is the nature of mind so, is another question. By its very nature mind is incapable of answering this. Cause in the sense of purpose, engages the attention of the philosophers. In this sense it is purely subjective. It is what Vedanta aptly describes, as the *Avidya*. We cannot detect any motive in the inanimate objects. Therefore

cause must be sought in the thinking subject and never in the object. To quote Warner Fite's words (*Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. 1. p. 360) 'the object serves highly useful and even as the indispensable means of communication ; but it is never adequate ; and it never stands for more than "so to speak", "as it were", or "as if". The cause of the object and hence of the subject, is the philosophic problem. The object is only the occasion for the subject being called the 'subject.' The existence of this division into subject and object is the very thing to be accounted for and the accounting for is impossible from the side of the object. Impersonal experience is denatured experience. Knowing is an experience of personal intimacy. The verb, 'to know' requires both (a) a personal subject, (b) a personal object. Modern Behaviourism cancels illogically this distinction between the subjective and the objective. But it is the tragic conflict between them that gives birth to philosophy. As the 'motive' or 'purpose' is individual it is reasonable to attempt explanations from the side of the subject only. The ambition of philosophers of the grand style has been to organise science into a system of rea-

son, starting from definite data in the form either of self-evident principles or of particular contents of perception, and proceeding step by step with logical regularities. The indefiniteness in what is denoted by the term universe, makes all sorts of contrary propositions true of it. In the words of Morris R. Cohen (*Contemporary American Philosophy* Vol. 1. p. 234) the universe is neither given in experience nor is it a mental construction ; yet it is certainly in some sense given...Obviously the total universe includes more than we can ever perceive or form into an image. Our experiences taper off into the indefinite ; and the extent and complexity of the world is beyond our power of synthesis. Hence to seek the purpose or the cause in the objective is to capitalize our ignorance with a big word. For, the purpose or the cause is not 'there'. We shall see how far Vedanta takes us in this limited field of enquiry.

Why should I see a world before me ? This is the philosophical problem. By a rigorous reasoning based on the time-honoured method of *Avasthatraya* I come to know that the world is not real. That is, it is not a permanent appearance, for it ceases to be in my deep sleep. Here a word of caution is necessary

regarding the character of the Vedic method of *Aवस्था*s. Most modern writers wrongly suppose that it is a psychological method. It has nothing to do with psychology as psychology is a science confined only to the waking experience. It is wholly a metaphysical method signifying the totality of the subject's experience. Waking, dream and sleep exhaust the whole possibility of the subject's experience. Now the motive for going to sleep must be sought in the waking mind. But the motive for the waking cannot be sought anywhere, for, the mind and the world are concomitants which appear together in dream or waking and cease to be in deep sleep. Where there is no mind there can be no motive. Therefore it is impossible to think of a cause for this waking world because the actual motive is absent with the mind (even if it is illogically imagined to be) in a previous state. No state is previous to or subsequent to another state, where, as we know, there is no common time to connect them. It is illogical then to think of a cause for the subject-object existence and impossible to get one within it. The subject cannot be the cause for the object nor can it have a motive for its object. A true Vedan-

tin holds that nothing can be regarded as causing some other thing in this universe. That is the conclusion of Gaudapada in his *Karikas*. The subject is as helpless as the object in this. But the subject alone can have a motive or cause in general. It has however no power over the cause of its existence. The best that it can do is to think of some personal creator and attribute motive to Him. The personalistic view of nature is not inconsistent with the view of science. But that is not the region of philosophy.

There can be no 'cause' for this subject-object existence, for by 'cause' we mean only a motive or purpose. Within it it is impossible. Therefore we are driven to the conclusion that 'cause' is only an individual possibility neither an objective factor nor a transcendental power in any form. As a universal power it is an illogical concept. 'All cosmologies' says Theodore De Laguna (*Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. 1. p. 419) 'are only figures of speech. To take them literally is to make nonsense of them...The common theistic conception of a creator and His infinite power of adapting means to ends is typical. From a logical standpoint cosmologies are the result of ignoring the limitations of

the human knowledge. There is no science of the universe and there is no science of God'. Cause then has no place in the beyond and is powerless within the existent, for it can only mean an individual's motive. The idea of motive rules the world and enters also the field of metaphysical enquiry, and the problem of the cause of this world is the result.

But on careful analysis it is found to be no problem at all. The cause is as such an illusion as the world, after a careful enquiry. Individual activities have their motives behind ; and this idea by habit, is extended to the whole of existence. To call it purposeless is without any meaning, for the idea of purpose is impossible in the sphere which transcends individuality. But individual existence is not purposeless or aimless, for we see it guided by purposes, ideals and ends. Motive has place so far. Hence cause as motive is circumscribed.

We will also examine if cause has any other meaning, a hidden one perhaps, that the mind is not clear about. If it means the basis of all this show, it is something to be known and really knowable. What is the reality behind all this existence? What is the permanent factor based on which the whole

show of creation is made possible? This is the way of the Upanishadic treatment and is the only question which is possible under the circumstances. If the term cause means this, then the question is not illogical, for the mind which includes the world must have a basis. If this basis is found to be permanent and invariable in any state, every bit of creation can be traced to it, not certainly as time-bound cause but as the time-free essence. It is the one changeless Essence that manifests itself in manifold forms. Cause in any other meaning is impossible. To make it real a creator has to be posited—where and when, it is impossible to achieve even in fancy, let alone His helplessness in that well-ordered chaos! If there is a God at all He must be identical with this Essence which by *Avasthatraya* we prove to be our real self, the transcendental conscious entity. If there is a cause at all, it must mean only this, and therefore Brahman is spoken of as the cause of this world.

It is in this sense, I think, the *Vedanta Sutras* treat of Brahman. The first Sutra¹ talks of Brahman in general. The second² speaks about

¹ अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा

² ब्रह्माद्यस्य यतः ।

the underlying cause or the basis of this whole existence. Lest we should suppose it is inanimate, its nature as perfect consciousness or intelligence is brought out in the third Sutra³ which talks of Brahman as the basis of knowledge. It is spoken of as cause just as clay is to the pots and gold to the jewels. It is the underlying principle or essence that is the object of real enquiry and any other meaning for that spirit of enquiry is only due to the ignorance of the real issue. Cause therefore in any other meaning, fails in itself.

If Sankara, the best exponent of the *Vedanta Sutras*, has anywhere said that *Maya* is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of this universe, we can find fault with him. He has made his rational position clear in his commentary on the second Sutra which if properly understood, would remove all our quarrels and be sufficient for our knowledge of the universe. Sankara nowhere brings in his *Maya* to cause this world. What is beyond an explanation, what is incapable of being explained by its very nature is *Maya* which is only a bare statement of fact. For instance an explanation of or even an attempt to explain the wak-

ing state will be illogical from the start. And yet we have every right to question how we got up from sleep, if there is really no cause for this waking in sleep. 'Maya' says Sankara in answer. The problem is an illusion—why, the one flaw i.e., the getting up from sleep being only a waking idea, is enough to make us feel what *Maya* is or means. It means the ignorance of the real issue or of the actual facts. The actual facts do not warrant the raising of this question. Hence it is identical with *Avidya* or individual's ignorance, the nature of which is clearly described in Sankara's *Adhyasa Bhashya*. *Adhyasa* is the way of the mind to mistake one thing for another, the unreal for the real, and to imagine a cause where there is no cause at all. *Adhyasa* is not the cause of the appearance of this world but only the cause of mistaking it as the Real. What is this world then? It is consciousness only. Warner Fite expresses this statement in a very humorous para (vide p. 357 *Contemporary American Philosophy*. Vol. 1.) thus: 'Your true academicist is careful to confine himself to the third person or to the impersonal "it is so." "It is so" rather than "I think so" because the use of "I" implies an immodest intrusion of his unworthy self

³ शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ।

into a realm divinely impersonal... If I should write "it is so", I could not but feel that I were speaking with the voice of God—since God alone can properly say "It is so." The idea of a world independent of consciousness, is a pure myth, an illusion. If any existence is possible at all, it must be in and for a consciousness only. *Adhyasa* makes however the conscious beings forget their own consciousness the one and indivisible 'reality', and thus helps to continue their mistaken notions of distinctions and differences, veiling the one unalterable truth that consciousness of the two, three or the manifold, is always one and secondless. *Adhyasa*,

Avidya and *Maya* all these mean the same and none of them mean the cause of this world or even cause in the general meaning that we give it. It is only in this light that knowledge can be of any use, for individual's knowledge can get rid of individual illusion. If *Maya* is a universal force, knowledge will be a mere wild goose chase. The spark of human knowledge may be a frail thing and it may be vanishing. But it is the only thing that counts with us and signifies our participation in the world's meaning. A life lived by my thinking self is an irreducible certainty with which the truth of the universe can never be incommensurate.

RESPECT FOR THE GIFTS OF NATURE

When Seppo, Ganto and Kinzan were travelling together on their Zen pilgrimage they lost their way in the mountains. It was growing dark and there was no monastery to ask for the night's lodging. At the time they happened to notice a green vegetable leaf flowing down along the stream. By this they naturally inferred that there was somebody living further up in the mountains. But one of the monk-pilgrims argued: "That is quite probable, but a man who does not mind letting go the precious vegetable leaf is not worth our consideration." Before he finished saying this they saw a man with a long-handed hook, running down after the lost leaf. This may be an extreme case, but the legend beautifully illustrates what profound respect Zen feels towards the gifts of nature as well as the offerings of its pious devotees.—*Zen Wisdom*.

SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

By Dr. K. C. Varadachari, M.A., Ph.D.

To write about any thinker who has reached the peak of his efforts is a difficult task. More so in the case of writers of the stamp of Sri Aurobindo, who claim to bring to bear on all that they write the eternal message of a transcendent sphere. It is imprudent, in one sense, to attempt to state their philosophies within the brief compass of an article and in doing it, less than justice might be done to their thoughts.

Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy is a philosophy of life, of evolution, of growth into the consciousness of the Divine. It is like most Indian philosophies a way of life towards the realization of freedom from *samsaric* bondage. In attempting to sketch out a way out of this apparently interminable *samsara*, which Buddha has even described as a hopeless cycle of births and deaths, it is evident that a clear conception of all the several motives and purposes and ends striven for must be known. The nature of this bondage, the nature of the world and all that it signifies to man and his hopes require clearest perception and understanding. Sri Aurobindo finds that the motive for getting out of the present state of discontent, for that is clear-

ly the psychological situation, is fourfold.

'The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and as it seems his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment—is also the highest which his thoughts can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure truth and unmixed bliss, the sense of secret immortality!'

The struggle to get out of the present and to aspire for a state where this discontent cannot prevail at any time, from which there can be no sliding or fall back into the mire of bondage, thus, whatever form it takes, is the fact about all attempts at knowing, for it is clear that knowledge alone can get rid of all ills, *Samsara*. *Nanyah pantha ayanaya vidyate*.

It is however the second of the endeavours that seems to be the most distinctive feature of the view of Sri Aurobindo, namely, the impulse towards perfection. The reason is not far to seek, for, whatever may be the initial conscious goal of man, man returns to the one resounding note of his terrestrial life;

the sense of free occupation, undistraught with frailty and faults, unoppressed by environment and a sense of dismay at life itself, and unthwarted in his love and humanity.

There are theories of life such as the materialistic or worldly view, the *lokayata*, which are at their best only glorifications of this world and its impermanence. Delighting in this impermanence man seeks to enjoy the world for what it is worth at any one moment without thought of the morrow. 'Eat and laugh and be merry, for tomorrow thou mayest die.' A wider variation of this view may take up the attitude of the behaviourists of modern times, who whilst accepting mind and life and other categories of existence, assert that they are off-shoots or aberrations of matter itself and nothing more. It may accept evolution as a fact upto the level of mind, and not beyond what we know of the 'objective' mind and such as its behaviour limited to the external observation of it can display; but it refuses to entertain any introspective understanding of the levels of mind and consciousness, which it categorically asserts are 'pathological'.

But it is precisely the business of any synthetic philo-

sophy not to explain away as pathological or epiphenomenal anything that has a right to be considered on its own merits, due to its *actual* existing. The behaviouristic view does not accept an inward impulsion that pushes forward matter itself, even if we accept it as the primal matrix of all the evolutes, as in the Philosophy of Samkhya. Accordingly, it fails to bring that immortal quality of the spiritual life, into its sphere of consideration.

As an anti-thetical movement to this terrestrial view, there has grown up amongst us a superterrestrial view sponsored by most religions and the mystics, a view not evolutionary in conception, but metaphysical mainly, which asserts the existence of other worlds, spiritual and perfect and luminous, to which we shall have to go, once we abandon this body of ours belonging to the imperfect and ignorant universe. Immortality of the soul is accepted, because it is because of this immortality, there can be a more luminous existence for it elsewhere.

But this view seems to have as its aim only freedom from this universe which it finds itself to be unjust, imperfect, unenjoyable and impermanent. It is the recoil from its impermanence that makes it

conjure up a world of perfection, a realm of pure essences or Ideas, a domain of permanence and utter enjoyability. The body is the bar to progress, a limitation on knowledge, a prison of the soul. This view does scant justice to life itself. It cannot bring into reality on this human plane that immortal sense that we seek to discover in art and beauty. But with all that has been promised in the future land of Hope, there has been on the part of the believers in the superterrestrial domain a feverish anxiety to reflect on this incorrigible planet something of that profound hereafter.

When we come to the absolutistic or illusionistic theory, we find that neither the reality nor the value of this terrestrial existence is accepted. In its view, 'evolution itself is a mistake, a delirium of the will to live' and the will to grow powerful, which is a living error conjured up by an ignorance that has somehow found its way to veil the incorruptible and transcendent Being of infinite knowledge and, in some cases, has become even the very power, *Shakti*, of that Pure Being. The illusionistic theory is a theory of either the relativistic variety or the absolutistic variety. It cannot be said that all kinds of absolutism also hold a theory of

relative reality. The relative reality theory when inspected reveals that at one stage there is an inner contradiction, which makes it impossible for it to be called a theory of *reality* at all, since its apex culminates in a grand unreality, from which a psychological twist or jump alone can land us on its opposite pole, the *Real* or the Absolute. Whilst it may be rightly conceded that Spirit or Intelligence is most supremely valuable, and that it is the only force that can create a world if at all, even if it be a world of delusion, and not matter however glorified it might be, it cannot be said that evolution, the one supreme fact of our experience, is itself delusion and a product of a myth-making function, as Bergson might say.

There is a single Spirit working in diverse ways at different stages. It is that which upholds the universe of different planes of matter, life, mind, intellect, intuition, supermind, overmind and other planes. The running thread of unity of Brahman or spirit is present in all and grants them the reality that is there because of Him, but it also reveals the evolution of each into the other, which is but an expression of the psychological shift of enjoyment of Brahman in each

plane either successively or simultaneously.

The Truth then is capable of being grasped only by intuition into the nature of evolution as well as of Being. Such an intuition will reveal that the principle of evolution is the 'thread' that binds all planes of being and experience from the inconscient metal, subconscious plant and animal, to the conscious man and the superconscious Divine. Accordingly we see that there are grades of existence and experiences, each with its own peculiar law of being, suited to the fullest expression and experiencing of its nature. This can be seen clearly in the sciences.

The laws of solids are not really the laws of liquids or gases, and the laws of biology are not the laws identical with the laws of matter. As we can see, the law of progress and synthesis in evolution reveals that man sustains and is adapted to the laws of physics, chemistry, biology and psychology at once. Following this then we conclude that the Superconscious sustains, controls and moves and lives and enjoys itself in all planes, according to its own unique laws of synthetic or total or integral existence. This view does justice to the terrestrial in so far as it grants reality and value of

its own order to it; to the superterrestrial view in as much as it accepts the integral immortality of the soul and the actual existence of mansions of spirit over and above the perceived universe of matter, and asserts however that the two are unreal in so far as they deny the truth of one another. They form the two faces of the one continuous reality of Brahman or Spirit. It would be clear that from the foregoing the third view, the Absolutistic is denied categorically by Aurobindo. But it is not so. For we can see that whilst illusionism is denied, the relative value of the higher and highest planes are recognized, for without that vision even the material and the vital and the mental cannot be appreciated and enjoyed adequately. We may say adapting Yajnavalkya's words that not for the sake of matter is matter dear but for the sake of the Self is the matter dear.

Sri Aurobindo seizes upon the central fact of his intuition into evolution, the Sacchidananda, which is not merely the *libido* of the psychoanalyst or the *elan vital* or mind-energy of Bergson, but the Supremest Spirit of which these are but vital and mental and intuitional manifestations, according to the plane in which they

work, and enunciates the necessity of realising oneself as at one with it. This Supreme Consciousness ever-present in all, appearing as it does in manifold ways through its power, wonderful, *Maya* is the one force of evolution. Man, who is struggling for the knowledge, perfection and enjoyment of the free state of being, must become cognizant of this Supreme Consciousness as the central fact, indeed as the soul and self of himself, and offer himself to it his total being. By such a total surrender and offering, complete emancipation from the law of its mind happens to the soul, and the soul is guid-

ed into the recognition and acceptance and obedience to the law of the Highest Plane of reality, namely, the Brahman. This is the evolution into the nature of the Divine, possible as a total fulfilment of the original promise of 'divination of Godhead, impulse towards perfection, search after pure truth and unmixed bliss and the sense of secret immortality.'

The Divine Life, *Bramasampatti*, is the fulfilment of the integral synthesis of all planes in the existence of the individual. It is God Himself who manifests individually uniquely His infinite perfections, even in the manifestation of the soul.

May I in prosperity give thanks to Thee, and in adversity preserve my patience, rejoicing in nought save what advances me towards Thee, grieving for nought save what withdraws me from Thee; neither seeking to please, nor fearing to displease, and save only Thee. Make me, O my God, humble without pretence, cheerful without levity, serious without dejection, grave without moroseness, active without frivolity, truthful without duplicity, fearful of Thee without despair, trustful in Thee without presumption, chaste without depravity, able to correct my neighbour without any angry feeling, and by word and example to edify him without pride, obedient without gain-saying, patient without murmuring.—*Thomas Aquinas*.

Be not a traitor to your thoughts. Be sincere; act according to your thoughts; and you shall surely succeed. Pray with a sincere and simple heart, and your prayers will be heard.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

TOLERANCE, *i.e.*, EQUALITY OF RELIGIONS

I do not like the word 'tolerance' but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahimsa* (non-violence) teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter. This admission will be readily made by a seeker of Truth, who follows the Law of Love. If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realised religion in its perfection, even as we have not realised God. Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and reinterpretation. Progress towards Truth, towards God, is possible only because of such evolution. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. All faiths constitute a

revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faith also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome these defects. Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty, to blend into our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths.

The question then arises:— Why should there be so many different faiths? The Soul is one, but the bodies which She animates are many. We cannot reduce the number of bodies; yet we recognise the unity of the Soul. Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches, and leaves, so is there one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held to be the right one? Everybody is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong. Hence the

necessity for tolerance, which does not mean indifference towards one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight which is as far from fanaticism as the north-pole from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own.

Tolerance obviously does not disturb the distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil. The reference here throughout is naturally to the principal faiths of the world. They are all based on common fundamentals. They have all produced great saints.

I would linger yet a while on tolerance. My meaning will perhaps become clearer if I describe here some of my experience. In Phoenix we had our daily prayers in the same way as in Sabarmati, and Musalmans as well as Christians attended them along with Hindus. The late Seth Rustomji and his children too frequented the prayer meetings. Rustomji much liked the Gujarati Bhajan, *Mane valun*, 'Dear, dear to me is the name of Rama'. If my memory serves me right, Mangalal or Kashi was once leading us in

singing this hymn, when Rustomji Seth exclaimed joyously, 'Say the name of Hormazd instead of the name of Rama'. His suggestion was readily taken up, and after that whenever the Seth was present, and sometimes even when he was not, we put in the name of Hormazd in place of Rama. The late Husain, son of Daud Seth, often stayed at the Phoenix Ashram and enthusiastically joined our prayers. To the accompaniment of an organ, he used to sing in a very sweet voice the song *Hai bahare bagh*, 'The garden of this world has only a momentary bloom.' He taught us all this song, which we also sang at prayers. Its inclusion in our *Bhajanavali* is a tribute to truth-loving Husain's memory. I have never met a young man who practised Truth more devotedly than Husain. Joseph Royeppen often came to Phoenix. He is a Christian, and his favourite hymn was *Vaishnava jana*, 'He is a Vaishnava (servant of the Lord), who succours people in distress.' He loved music and once sang this hymn, saying 'Christian' in place of Vaishnava. The others accepted his reading with alacrity, and I observed that this filled Joseph's heart with joy.

When I was turning over the pages of the sacred books

of different faiths for my own satisfaction I became sufficiently familiar for my purpose with Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Hinduism. In reading these texts, I can say, that I was equiminded towards all these faiths, although perhaps I was not then conscious of it.

Refreshing my memory of those days, I do not find I ever had the slightest desire to criticise any of those religions merely because they were not my own, but read each sacred book in a spirit of reverence and found the same fundamental morality in each. Some things I did not understand in them, and do not understand even now, but experience has taught me, that it is a mistake hastily to imagine that anything we cannot understand is necessarily wrong. Some things which I did not understand first have since become as clear as day-light. Equimindedness helps us to solve many difficulties and even when we criticise anything, we express ourselves with a humility and a courtesy, which leave no sting behind them.

The acceptance of the doctrine of equality of religions does not abolish the distinction between religion and irreligion. We do not propose to cultivate tolerance for irreligion. That being so, some people might object that there would be no room left for equimindedness if every one took his own decision as to what was religion and what was irreligion. If we follow the Law of Love, we shall not bear any hatred towards the irreligious brother. On the contrary, we shall love him, and therefore either we shall bring him to see the error of his ways, or he will point out our error, or each will tolerate the other's difference of opinion. If the other party does not observe the Law of Love, he may be violent to us. If however we cherish real love for him, it will overcome his bitterness in the end. All obstacles in our path will vanish if only we observe the golden rule that we must not be impatient with those whom we may consider to be in error, but must be prepared, if need be, to suffer in our own person.

-Extracts from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi.

What you think, that you should speak. Let there be harmony between your thoughts and words. Otherwise, if you merely say that God is your all in all while in your mind you have made the world your all in all, you cannot derive any benefit thereby.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE MIGHT OF WOMAN IN HINDU TRADITION

By 'Muralidhar'

In India where everything has its aureole of spiritual associations, it is but fitting that woman comes to her due share of divinity. She is considered not merely as a woman but as pointing beyond herself to something more. She is looked upon as an aspect of a deeper reality, a crypto-goddess on earth, the epic symbol of *shakti*, the Cosmic Energy which embodies the principle of universal motherhood. 'United with this *shakti* only', says Sri Sankaracharya in an exalted poetic mood, 'the Great Siva is able to transact the governance of the universe.' The echo of ages of Indian culture rings its deep regard of womanhood in the words, 'Where women are honoured, there the Gods have their sway', wherin lofty chivalry culminates in a naive deification of woman. It is small wonder then that in a land so pre-eminently propitious for women, mighty women—mighty not merely in a material sense—have sprung up from time to time, even as the *avatars* have come to us to restore the national balance in times of crises.

In the long and stately procession of Indian culture starting from the Upani-

shadic times, we witness a series of brilliant women in whom Indian culture individualises itself as the spirit of the epoch. Gargi and Maitreyi were dazzling specimens of the Upanishadic age. It must have been a sight for the Gods, the sight of Gargi challenging no less a personage than Yajnavalkya for a dialectical duel, in the philosophical congress called by King Janaka. Gargi could address a congress of learned ascetics and Maitreyi was a woman with the highest knowledge of Brahman. This intellectual and spiritual tradition was ably kept up by the women saints of the Buddhistic order of nuns among whom were some poets of eminence. The most famous were Mahapajapati Gotami, the Buddha's aunt, Tissa, Mitta, Sundari Nanda, all of whom attained Arhathipaship.

In the puranas we get a long line of women worthies who though they came as the consorts of great personages would have shown by themselves with equal brightness. Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Savitri, Damayanti and Draupati are only a few of that illustrious line. Each is an epic in itself. 'There may have been several Ramas',

writes a great Indian savant, 'but never more than one Sita. She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita.' A woman going into the kingdom of Death and by dint of persuasion, perseverance and self-consuming love for her husband getting back from Death her husband's life: that was Savitri, the highest peak of heroic sacrifice for a husband. The true Hindu attitude is seen illustrated in the high place assigned to these women. They are adored as Virgins, *Kanyas*, and to remember their names—the Hindu believes—is to bring about an annulment of their sins.¹ All these exemplars of womanhood, if they have stood the test of time and continue to inspire us, it is, more than anything else, due to their capacity to enshrine in themselves the lofty feminine virtues,—virtues that are the breath of India's inner being—such as chastity, purity, and self-immolating love for the husband. Their *forte* was *Dharma*, and they live even today because of it.

Coming down to later times, we meet heroic speci-

mens of womanhood, whose passion for their country threw round them a halo more political than spiritual as was the case with their forerunners. The periods of Mohammedan and Moghul domination of India saw the birth of many heroes and heroines who gave themselves up to the restoration of India's jeopardised national integrity. Again in the dawn of the last century India confronted her conqueror and hence had to vindicate with all her might her vitality to defend her own against odds. Along with those heroes who became martyrs on the altar of India's freedom there arose a number of heroines who either faced the enemy and fought or by acts of self-immolation kept alive the flame of chastity. Who in the west was more heroic than those of whom the Rajput chronicles tell? Joan of Arc was not more a patriot than Chand Bibi or the wonderful Queen of Jhansi who in the year 1857 fought in person with the British troops. Yet another such glorious instance was the great Mahratta Queen of Indore, Ahalya Bai, who on the death of her husband declared herself a defenceless woman, but on being allowed to reign did so for many a

¹ अहला शैपती सीता तारा मण्डोदरी तथा ।
पञ्चकन्या स्मरेत्तिं सर्वे पापविमोचनं ॥

long year, eating the Hindu widow's handful of rice of her own cooking and spending her great revenues in public works on the largest scale.

Mother India while bringing forth these exquisite specimens of the distinctive genius of her cultural epochs has exhibited her remarkable capacity to react to impacts from outside. The last century opened in the face of such a cultural *melee* and she had to face a new situation brought on by the cultural invasion by the west. India's *entelechy* took form in spiritual giants like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and others whose lives blazoned the truth that India's inner culture retained its virginity in spite of the exotic cultural impact. Still the subtle influence of the Western moral and social standards unfortunately found easy sway over Indian hearts and the fashionable indifference of the western youth to the sanctity of relations with women and their facetious disregard of the ideal of the inviolability of marriage had their baneful repercussions in the minds of Indian sisters. For them the inspiring ideals of Sita and Savitri slowly paled away and they began to fancy themselves playing Juliets to Indian Romeos. To guard against

such disastrous reactions by holding up the ideal of Indian womanhood and by picturing its sublimity as reflected in the different aspects of wife, mother and saint, came Sri Sarada Devi, the spiritual counterpart of Sri Ramakrishna. The idea of motherhood so far as it is based on the inviolability of marriage was held in great sanctity in India; but this must find sublimation and completion in the still greater doctrine of the religious celibacy; that is, the towering ideal of the super-social life, which gives sanction and relation to all social bonds. Women saints we have in the Upanishadic and Buddhistic traditions, ideal wives we have in the Puranic tradition. But here is one who pressed both these ideals into service. To expect a dominating and aggressive woman in her or to search for colourful and picturesque events in her life will be to miss the real point of her greatness. She was mighty not in her externals but in spirit like her forerunners.

A young girl of subtle charms as the consort of the God-intoxicated Ramakrishna—this is how Sri Sarada Devi appears before us at the beginning of her spiritual life. 'As for me,' says Sri Ramakrishna, 'the Mother has shown me that

She resides in every woman and so I have learned to see Her in every woman. 'Do you want to drag me down into Maya,' asks Sri Ramakrishna. 'Why should I do that,' came the prompt reply from Sri Sarada. 'I have come only to help you in the path of religious life.' Such a noble answer can come only from a woman of immaculate purity. That these words sprang from no hypocritical intention to please anybody, but was, the spontaneous expression of her nature and of the lofty ideal with which she had come to identify is amply evidenced by her later life.

As wife Sri Sarada Devi fulfilled with unusual efficiency all functions except the biological. She not only threw herself heart and soul into the service of the Master—as she preferred to address Sri Ramakrishna—but deified such service by making it the first and foremost of her spiritual *sadhanas*, by seeing in Sri Ramakrishna the God Eternal and Absolute in the general spiritual sense. Opportunities of service were thus for her opportunities of communion with the divine personality of Sri Ramakrishna and in this we see the glimmering dawn of a new life for Sri Sarada Devi, the life of the spiritual mother to coming gene-

rations, a career which the Master prophesied and for which he prepared her. The prophesy came about like this: Sri Ramakrishna on coming to know that Sri Sarada Devi's mother was aggrieved to find her daughter deprived of her legitimate joy of becoming a mother, said, 'Mother, don't worry; she will be tired of her children calling her Mother'. She is popularly known as the Holy Mother even to this day. Sri Ramakrishna's great appreciation of the Holy Mother's high spiritual worth is brought to light by an incident that happened in the early days of her life at Dakshineswar. The Holy Mother was busy preparing the supper for the night. The Master finding one of his young disciples absorbed in meditation went up to him and said, 'Well, my boy, the Deity on whom you are meditating is busy making *chapatis* in the kitchen. Go and help her in kneading the flour.' He fully recognised the immense value of her contribution to the propagation of his message and of the many ways in which he trained her for the task of spiritual ministry, the performance of the *Shodasi Puja* was the most significant. In this rite he installed her as the Deity and offered to her the fruits of his austerities.

his rosary and all and made her the virtual participant of the spiritual treasure that was his.

The Holy Mother, as we shall see, proved a worthy trustee of this treasure. Of all gifts, the supreme one is that of spiritual solace, the gift of a saint. Her title to immortal motherhood lay in that she summed up the genius of the saint and the Mother and showered in all her bounty on all who resorted to her the blessings of spiritual illumination as also those of material happiness. She was god-like in her love and sympathy for the erring and the penitent and those who went to her broken-hearted and repentent of a riotous life found in her a very kind mother even as such people found a most loving father in Sri Ramakrishna. She received them with open arms and gave them consolation and light which went to sustain them in their lives. Her greatness as a spiritual teacher lies in the note of tolerance she struck in her teachings to which she gave a modern colouring. She never pressed upon anyone the acceptance of Sri Ramakrishna as the ideal, but only held that the spiritual advancement of aspirants would be accelerated by a true understanding of him. She studied the religious

traditions of the aspirant's family, whether it was Vaishnava, Saiva, or Sakta as also his spiritual inclinations before she initiated him.

Uneducated though the Holy Mother was in the modern sense of the term, her outlook was progressive and sympathies cosmopolitan. She blessed Sister Nivedita in her great effort for the education of women and encouraged Sister Sudhira to continue Nivedita's work. Her all-embracing love claimed people outside India as her children. When the disciples spoke to her about the warm reception Sri Ramakrishna's teachings received in the west, she is said to have remarked: 'Those people are also my children.' And we read with what cordiality and warmth she entertained her western devotees like Sister Nivedita, Mrs. Ole Bull, Sister Christine and others.

Such was the Holy Mother, the modern Madonna, wife, mother and saint in one, and this in the highest sense of the terms. She comes to us, not as a dim figure of distant history like the mother of Christ, but a personality of flesh and blood, pictured on the canvass of recent history. Human every inch yet divine to the core, her figure has an inescapable actuality, never bedimmed by incredible ex-

altations of divinity. She did not weave round herself supernatural miracles nor was she given to a complex of spiritual superiority. Hence her appeal to the modern age. The genius of womanhood down the ages flowed into her. The might of Gargi that challenged Yajnavalkya, the saintly magnetism of the Buddhist nuns, the fire of *pativratyam* that burned in Savitri and her contemporary sisters, and the heroism of the national heroines met in her, not to emanate in the same colours and win the same battles but to emerge for fresh conquests, to set up new standards and to illumine the ideal of the Motherhood of God for all times and climes.

Behind the varying patterns of womanhood there is an essential principle which when considered alone bereft of the cramping limitations of empirical life, shines forth in sublime grandeur. It may be described as the principle of the Essential Feminine, and it is the *svadharma* of every woman to nourish it. It is the other phase of the cosmic principle and can roughly be equated with *shakti*. It was given to the Holy Mother to add meaning to its benign aspect by holding aloft the ideal of Motherhood, understood in its lofty sense. Its various other as-

pects were lit up by the lives of those mighty women who went before her. They were mighty because their Mother culture invested them with *shakti*.

Women are on the move all the world over and by stepping into new fields of activity they have exhibited capacity and prowess that may well-nigh match with those of their brothers. The west can no more address women as 'frailty' as they have been doing for centuries. India's role of handing over the torch of spiritual light to the west, encourages us to affirm India's valuable contribution to this general upheaval in the self-consciousness of women. It seems as though these great Indian women have transferred a little of their 'fire' into their sisters outside. Among women in the west there is scramble for masculine standards, but this cannot eclipse a nobler and healthier aspect namely the growing realization that woman fulfils herself by functioning as man's dynamic counterpart by lending her active assistance and by working in perfect concord with him. Here India wins yet another laurel as the cultural Mother, for the emphasis on the contribution of woman as man's virtual counterpart involves the motherhood of the Indian

conception of *shakti* functioning in perfect harmony with *siva* to transact the governance of the universe. It would be fatal to the interests of woman to miss this fundamental truth of her existence. All the women notables we have referred to above, speak with one voice, the voice of the might born of their whole-hearted devotion to their *svadharma*—the cultivation and expression of the life-principle of the Essential Feminine—urging their posterity to awake to their 'reserve energies' and to harness them for higher ends. There is today an ever increasing need in India for the canalising of such 'reserve energies' for national ends, for the resuscitation of her spiritual life. Cultural mendicancy cannot bring this about.

It is suicidal to be blind to the meaning of the tale of

contemporary civilizations in ancient Egypt and in Babylon, dead beyond redemption's skill, because they parted with their ancestral trust of culture. India shall not do this. Lofty ideals when enlivened by practice generate a spiritual contagion. Let the Indian sisters live those exquisite ideals held aloft by their worthy ancestors and cause that 'contagion', the contagion of Indian idealism. This will not only shield them against all unhealthy foreign influences but will help them as powerful instruments of cultural conversion. Thus can be established once again the cultural motherhood of India. And so doing let the descendants of Sita and Savitri prove themselves worthy of their glorious past by paving for a more glorious future.

FOUR GREAT VOWS OF THE BODHISATTVA

However innumerable sentient beings are,
 I vow to save them;
 However inexhaustible the passions are,
 I vow to extinguish them;
 However immeasurable the Dharmas are,
 I vow to study them;
 However incomparable the Buddha-truth is,
 I vow to attain it.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sankaracharya : By Suryanarayana Sastrī. Published by G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras. Price As. 12. Pp. 128+viii.

The name of the author of this short, penetrative study of the life and works of Sri Sankara is sufficient assurance for its excellence and importance. In the first part of the book the writer attempts to examine critically the traditional data for the biography of the great philosopher and saint, and after carefully sifting them, places the bare outline of the life beyond doubt and obscurity. In determining the genuineness of the numerous works commonly ascribed to Sri Sankara the erudite author finds the standards adopted by Dr. S. K. Belvelkar 'fairly satisfactory,' and with him rejects the testimony of tradition where other evidence are not strongly in favour. However he sounds a warning to critical scholars who put too much faith in style and language in the determination of authorship, date, etc., when he says: 'It must not be forgotten, however, that a style of composition which looks artificial to the critic may have been spontaneous for the author; spontaneity relates to the spirit more than to form there cannot be a universal or cut-and-dry standard of artificiality.'

A scholarly study of Sri Sankara's philosophy is given in the remaining part of the book, avoiding technicalities as far as possible and keeping away from controversial points. A careful reader can at once detect the masterly hand of a profound student of Sankara's philosophy in the soundness of judgment, clarity of presentation, scrupulous care to bring to the fore all that is crucial, rare vigilance to suppress everything non-essential, and a perfectly idiomatic linguistic medium, on every page of this short work. A vast mass of Advaitic literature has been distilled here and the quintessence is given for the beginner who desires to be introduced into the subject.

Even an advanced student will find it a pleasure to go through the pages of this book and will be surely benefitted, especially in clarifying his own knowledge of the system. We unhesitatingly recommend the book to all who are likely to be interested in this grand system of philosophy and its great expositor to whom, as the present writer justly remarks, 'all eyes have turned and will continue to turn with loving reverence, so long as man retains his nobility and wisdom its prestige'.

Prasnottararatnamalika : Publisher: B. G. Paul & Co., Madras. Price As. 2. Pp. 32.

This garland of ethical and spiritual thoughts is from the famous pen of Bhagavan Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. The author himself says that it is potent to effect all human ends visible and invisible (*drishta adrishttartha-sadhanapatiyan*) and that the study of it will make one pure and brilliant in the assembly of good people. The simple telling verses of the text are presented in Devanagari, and the Tamil translation printed in dialogue form below each verse. The publishers deserve all praise for popularizing this short but noble text.

Science of Pranayama, Enlarged third edition : By Swami Shivananda. Published by P. K. Vinayagan & Co. 31, Broadway, Madras.

This is a prescriptive book interspersed with descriptions of psycho-physical processes calculated to make one healthy and help one's spiritual upliftment. *Ashtanga yoga* and *hatha yoga* have increased appeal to the common man to-day as they are not bereft of worldly promises. The author introduces the book with the remarkable feats of the Yogis such as flying in the air, etc., by levitation (so one may dispense with Railways, Aeroplanes, etc.), by applying an ointment on the heels or by putting a pill in the mouth or by the practice of *Khechari Mudra*.

It is said, by Yoga one may know what one's relations do at distant lands. Yoga can even revive dead men. The book then proceeds to explain the *pranayama* and all that it implies; i.e., physical, mental, and environmental changes and needs required to practise it successfully. There is elaborate description touching on almost all aspects of the science of breathing. That the work has run through three editions speaks for its attractiveness. There are good many advices in it which are sure to help man for a better life if, as the author rightly says, they are followed by using common sense in the actual working up of the exercises.

The Science of the Soul (Being Srikantha's Bhashya on the Brahma Sutras): By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastriar. Price Rs. 1-8-0. Pp. 216.

Some time ago we had occasion to review in these columns the learned Sastriar's abridged edition of *Sankarabhashya* bearing the same title. There are about a dozen im-

portant Bhashyas on the Brahma-sutras and if all of them are brought out in this fashion they will very much help the ordinary reader to get a comparative view of all the systems. The scheme is highly appreciable inasmuch as the secondary details and disputes not required for the direct apprehension of the main trend of the Bhashya are judiciously omitted. Srikantha-charya did for Saivism what Sri Ramanujacharya did for Srivaishnavism as far as the *Sutrabhashya* is concerned. The present work gives translations of all the *sutras*, topic by topic and an English rendering of the significant passages of the Bhashyas. Extracts of original passages of outstanding significance adds to the value of the work. It is a very able and highly useful introduction to the system, and we have no hesitation in recommending it to all students of religion and philosophy. The excellence of the publication is belittled by a number of misprints, especially in the Sanskrit extracts.

"To have no regular work, no set sphere of activity,—what a miserable thing it is! . . . Effort, struggles, with difficulties! that is as natural to a man as grubbing in the ground is to a mole. To have all his wants satisfied is something intolerable—the feeling of stagnation which comes from pleasures that last too long. To overcome difficulties is to experience the full delight of existence."—*Schopenhauer*.

The young bamboo can be easily bent, but the full grown bamboo breaks when it is bent with force. It is easy to bend the young heart towards God, but the untrained heart of the old escapes the hold whenever it is so drawn.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

To think of Him as formless is quite right. But take care that you do not run away with the idea that that view alone is true and that all else is false. Meditating upon Him as a being with forms is equally right. But you must hold on to your particular view until you realise God; and then everything would be clear.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Silver Jubilee Celebration & Re-union of the Past and Present Students of the Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home.

The Re-union of the past and present students and the Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home began on the 21st October and lasted for the following two days.

On the 21st October the scheduled programme began in the morning with Homa. This was followed by the first session of the Conference of all students. This conference is the main feature of the Re-union. Swami Nirvedananda was unanimously elected as the general President. The address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee and the Secretary's report were read. Then the Jubilee number of the *Vidyaarthi*, the manuscript magazine of the Students' Home, was placed before the conference by the President. After speeches by the members present, the President delivered his illuminating address showing clearly how Swamiji's ideas and ideals on education contain in them the real solution of the many baffling problems now facing human society, and how the present Students' Home is being run on the lines suggested by the great Swami. In the afternoon session many proposals were placed before the conference and discussed. The day's proceedings came to a close with a magical performance.

The 22nd October, the second day, began with special worship of Sri Guru Maharaj. Monks from the Belur Math and other centres were present at the day's function. At the request of the ex-students' Standing Committee, Swami Nirvedananda laid the foundation of the gymnasium which the ex-students proposed to erect in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee. At 4 p. m. a public meeting was held in the Students' Home premises, Sir Man-

mathanath Mukherji presiding. The subject for discussion before the meeting was 'Swami Vivekananda on the Ideas and Ideals of Education'. Dr J. C. Sinha, M.A., P. R. S., Ph.D., Dr Jyotirmoy Ghosh, M.A., Ph.D., Principal Devaprasad Ghosh, Swami Asangananda, Swami Tejasananda and Prof. Govindachandra Dev were the speakers. The President placed before the meeting the Souvenir published in connection with the Silver Jubilee. At the end of the meeting the gentlemen present were treated to light refreshments. At night, the Barbela Sahitya Baithak staged the drama 'Wishma'.

On the last day the conference began at 4 p. m. and came to a close at 10 p. m. There were two breaks, once for the Aratrika and again for the comic sketches by Hasyanidhi Monoranjan Sarker.

THE SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR.

The Silver Jubilee Souvenir is an artistic publication with a number of attractive and illustrative plates, delineating the history of the Students' Home and giving the impression it has left on the minds of the visitors, inmates and workers. The Home, we are informed here, began in humble circumstances in 1916 and after a steady growth of 16 years came to be lodged in its own premises at Sir Romesh Mitter Road, Dum Dum in October 1932. Due to the limited means at its disposal and increasing demand for accommodation it had to change lodgings thrice, until it came to its own premises. Since then it saw better days and block after block was added. In 1916, the year of its affiliation to the Mission, it had a bank balance of Rs. 3-5-9. At the last year-end it had a balance of about Rs. 9,600 after spending Rs. 2,34,000 under different heads. This fact alone is enough to reveal its tremendous progress and beneficent results.

Right from its beginning it had all along enjoyed the protecting care of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who ever blessed the institution by their intimate contacts. The Home proved itself worthy of this spiritual legacy by yielding a rich crop of twenty monastic workers to the Mission.

The Souvenir opens with blessings from the President and Secretary of the Mission followed by the messages of goodwill from distinguished visitors. A reminisciential symposium from the past alumni of the institution, both lay and monastic, is a very attractive feature of the Souvenir. Nothing else printed in this Souvenir is more interesting or directly indicative of the qualitative importance of the genuine work done by the Home than the grateful appreciation of the Home issuing from the hearts of the old students. Here are some extracts: (1) 'The "Home" that cradled my youth and sought to nurture it with living ideals of all that is noble in man has left me a wealth of sacred memories.' (2) 'I shall never forget those seven years and a few months of my life ... but for which life would have been very much poorer in thoughts and range of vision.' (3) 'Those days . . . are a rich part of me. I cannot measure their value in words. They are amongst the most real things in my life.'

SWAMI MADHAVANANDAJI'S TOUR

I

Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, left Belur on the 10th October for Vizagapatam; on the 12th October he delivered a public lecture at the Town Hall at Vizagapatam on "Religion in Everyday Life." Mr. C. S. Venkatapathi Raju, C. I. E., was the president of the meeting. On the next day the Swami performed the opening ceremony of the new building of the Mission Students' Home, the generous gift of Mr. K. Ramabrahmam, a well-

known merchant of the town. Returning to Belur on the 15th, he left on the following day for Kalimpong, whence he visited Jalpaiguri on the 19th October. The next day, he gave a talk to the ladies at the Mission premises, and the day after, he was accorded a public reception. On the 22nd he left for Dibrugarh, where on the next day he presided over a condolence meeting in the Ashrama in memory of the late lamented Jogindra Chandra Chakravarty, the leading citizen of the District and a great friend of the Ashrama, and also addressed a public meeting, at which Pandit Ram Narayan Tarkatirtha presided. The next evening he gave a public religious lecture in the local High School premises, after which he left for Shillong.

At Pandu he was cordially received by the gentry of Gauhati, from where he motored to Shillong. The same evening a public reception was given to him at the Quinton Hall, presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. B. K. Das, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Assam, after which he spoke at a public meeting at Laban held for the promotion of communal harmony. On the 26th he gave a talk to the Karmi-Sangha of the Mission in the morning, and delivered a public lecture on "Religion and its Practice" at the Opera Hall presided over by Mr. M. A. T. Iyengar, I. C. S. On the 27th he gave another lecture on "Vedanta and Human Problems" at the same place, Mr. S. P. Desai, I.C.S., presiding. On the 28th the Swami presided, at the Quinton Hall, over the Prize Distribution ceremony of the Mission School at Mowkhari. The next day he visited the Ramakrishna Mission High School at Cherrapunji, where he was given one address by the public and one by the students. In the course of his reply he spoke on "The Way to Happiness". Returning to Shillong on the 30th, he gave a public lecture at the Sen Khasi Hall on "The Message of India," Mr. A. Khong Pai presiding. On the 31st he left by

car for Sylhet, reaching the Mission centre in the evening.

On the 1st November, the Swami was given a public reception in the premises of the Raja Girish Chandra H. E. School, presided over by Rai Bhadur Satis Chandra Dutt. On the next day he addressed in the morning the members of the School Institute, who are teachers on "The Place of Religion in Education", at the Government High School, and in the evening he delivered a lecture at the first-named place on "Religion and World Problems," Principal Harshanath Sen of the Murarichand College presiding. On the 3rd he went in the morning to a village called Dalaipara, 6 miles from the town, to preside at the Prize Distribution of the Mission's primary Schools in the District and on the way visited an outdoor Dispensary run by the Mission. In the evening he gave another public lecture in the above High School premises on "Vedanta in Practice," presided over by Pandit Akhil Chandra Tarkatirtha, Principal, Sanskrit College, Sylhet. On the 4th the Swami addressed the students of the the M. C. College in the afternoon, and held a conversation class at the Ashrama in the evening.

The next evening he reached Habiganj. On the 6th November he was given a public reception at the Town Hall and received three other addresses. He also visited the Mission School for cobbler children at Gosainagar, in the outskirts of the town. The next day he lectured to the students of the local College. On the 7th he left for Karimganj. On the 8th November he was given a public reception at the Ashrama in the evening, presided over by Mr. Jarman, S.D.O., after which the Swami gave a talk to the ladies. The next morning he held a conversation class for the students, and in the evening lectured on "The Modern World and Religion." On the 11th he reached Silchar in the morning, and addressed a public meeting in the evening at the Ashrama premises,

in which Mr. S. K. Haldar, I. C. S., District Judge, presided. The next morning the Swami laid the foundation of the Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Ashrama, addressed the students of the local High Schools in the afternoon, and in the evening gave another public lecture at the Ashrama, Mr. Haldar presiding. On the 13th he delivered a lecture to the students of the local College and held a conversation for the ladies. The next morning he left for Hailong, on the Hill Section of the A. B. Railway, where in the evening he was given a public reception at the Jaganath temple. On the 15th he reached Gauhati, where in the next morning he spoke on the ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission to the students of the local College. After a visit to the local Ramakrishna Seva Samiti in the afternoon, he addressed a public meeting at the Harisabha on "Contributions of Sri Ramakrishna in the field of Religion." He then left for the Belur Math, which he reached on the 17th November. Throughout the tour the Swami was accorded a uniformly hearty welcome, and had the pleasure of coming in contact with respectable citizens as well as devotees and close friends of the Ashramas. The meetings, too, were mostly very well attended and evoked great enthusiasm.

II

Sreemat Swami Madhavanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, arrived at Narayanganj on the 23rd November '41. On his arrival he was received by Mr. K. C. Banerjee, Secretary, Reception Committee, Rai D. C. Mazumdar Bahadur, President and Swami Sampurnanandaji, Secretary of the Local Ramakrishna Mission Committee, Mr. J. Paul, Bhupesh Choudhury, Rabindra Benerjee, Jitendra Banerjee, Rajendra Guha, Rajendra Bardhan, Umesh Ghose, Ranjit Ghose,

Secretary, Sanskrit Cultural Association, Dr. S. N. Das, Dr. Umananda Dutta, Lalit Paul, Amrita Lal Hajra, and other distinguished citizens of Narayanganj. A large number of students including the boarders of the Vidyarthi Bhavan also were present at the Station.

In the morning of 24th November, Madhavanandaji performed the opening ceremony of the Rajah Sreenath Chhatra Niketan building, a two-storeyed annexe to the Local Ramakrishna Mission Vidyarthi Bhavan, donated by Kumar Prematha Nath Roy Bahadur of Bhagyakul. The function was a grand success. On the same day at 2 p.m. Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University, and Prof. Haridas Bhattacharjee, Provost of the Jagannath Hall met Swami Madhavanandaji and visited the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyarthi Bhavan. They were greatly impressed with what they saw. Sir Sarvapalli remarked "I had the pleasure of visiting the Ramakrishna Centre (Students' Home) at Narayanganj. I was greatly impressed by the work it is doing. I wish its great success in the future. In these days of communal tension its influence is very healthy".

In the afternoon at 4 p.m. at a public meeting in the Ramakrishna Mission premises, Mr. Haridas Bhattacharjee presiding, an Address of Welcome was presented to Swami Madhavanandaji on behalf of the citizens of Narayanganj and four addresses were presented to Sir Sarvapalli on behalf of the public, the College Union, Sanskrit Cultural Association, and Jaytara Chatuspathi. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen from Dacca, Munshiganj, Sonargaon, Kalma, and Paikpara locality attended the meeting.

There was a gathering of more than two thousand people.

On the 25th November, Mr. K. K. Sen, Managing Director of the Chittagong Engineering & Electric Supply Co., Ltd., Narayanganj and Mr. Ananda Mohan Poddar, President, Merchant Association, invited Swamiji to a Tea party.

The next morning he left by car for Dacca, where in the evening he delivered a lecture at the Lytton Hall to the students of the Dacca University on "Vedanta as a Universal Religion." In the afternoon of the 27th he gave a short discourse at the Mission centre on Srimat Swami Premanandaji Maharaj, whose 81st birthday fell on that date, and in the evening he gave a second lecture to the University students at the Jagannath Hall on "Swami Vivekananda and Indian Problems." Both the meetings were presided over by Prof. H. D. Bhattacharya and were open to the public. On the 28th the Swami returned by car to Narayanganj in the evening.

The next morning he left for Sonargaon, seven miles from Narayanganj. He was enthusiastically received at a place two miles from the village, and led in procession to the Ashrama, where in the afternoon there was a large gathering of ardent devotees of both sexes, who came from the villages around to meet the Swami. On the 30th a public reception was given to him in the afternoon at the Ashrama premises.

The Swami returned to Narayanganj the next morning, laid the foundation of a building for the Dispensary run by the Ashrama, and left in the afternoon for Belur, where he arrived in the morning of the 2nd December. He had a good appreciative audience at every meeting he addressed. The number of those who sought interviews with him was also considerable.

PURNA KUMBH MELA

An Appeal

Purna Kumbh Mela will be held in Prayag on the Tribeni sands in 1942. The first *Snan* (holy bathing) will take place on Makar Sankaranti, the 13th January and the next *Snan* on Amavasya, the 16th January; the third on the Basant Panchami, the 21st January; and the last on 1st February. During this occasion there will be a large concourse of pilgrims for holy *Snan*. The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Allahabad, has decided to open a

camp on the Mela grounds and among other activities to serve the Sadhus visiting their camp according to their resources. We anticipate an expenditure of Rs. 2,000/- for the Sadhu Seva. Considering the large number of people who will gather on the occasion from all parts of India, we are making a special appeal to the public to contribute liberally. Contributions may be sent to:

SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA
Hon. Secretary,
Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama,
Muthiganj, ALLAHABAD.

If you feel proud, let it be in the thought that you are the servant of God, the son of God. Great men have the nature of children. They are always children before Him; so they are free from pride. All their strength is of God, and not their own. It belongs to Him and comes from Him.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

Knowledge of Non-duality is the highest; but God should be worshipped first as a master is worshipped by his servant, as the adored by the adorer. This is the easiest path; it soon leads to the highest knowledge of unity.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.





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VEDIC NATIONAL PRAYER

आ ब्रह्मद् ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवर्चसी जायताम आ राष्ट्रे, राजन्यः शूर इष्व्योऽ-
तिव्याधी महारथो जायताम्, दोग्ग्री धेनुर्वैदानद्वानाशुः सप्तिः पुरन्विर्योणा,
जिष्णु रथेष्टाः, समेयो युवास्य यजमानस्य धीरो जायताम्, निकामे निकामे
नः पर्जन्यो वर्षतु, फलवत्यो न ओषधयः पच्यन्ताम्, योगक्षेमो नः कल्पताम् ॥

O God, may there be born in our kingdom men of spiritual inclination resplendent with divine wisdom, heroic rulers well-known for their military skill, cows yielding milk profusely, bulls quite fitted for draught, horses gifted with speed, women adorned with virtues and excellences, victorious charioteers, and youths endowed with character and ability to suit any eminent assembly. May the master of the house who sacrifices to Gods get heroic sons. May there be rain in the country according to the needs, and the herbs bring forth fruits in time. May we have all prosperity and advancement.

Sukla-Yajur-Veda, XXII. 22.

THE HEART OF THE BHAGAVADGITA

By P. Narasimhayya, M.A., Ph.D.

This great philosophical poem is in a sense the coping stone of the Epic of the *Mahabharata*.

Its scene is laid on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, near modern Delhi. Arjuna is faced by the armies of his relations who have denied him and his brothers their just rights and subjected them to prolonged persecution and treachery. Should he engage in his duty on that battlefield, the field of duty, the *dharmakshetra*? Arjuna quails before the thought. He is moved to pity and sorrow for those who will be mown down by his arrows. He sees bad omens and hesitates with fear. He thinks too of the aftermath of war, the confusions in society and custom. He thinks also of the peace of renunciation and feels it better to withdraw than stand at his post and do his duty. Every sentiment and reason seems to him to be against action. He throws down his arms and sinks in his seat, too despondent to do anything.

It is in this situation that Sri Krishna, his friend and for the nonce his charioteer, gives him the teaching of the Gita. In the next seventeen sections of it, he ranges over

every vital aspect of morality, religion, metaphysic and practical discipline. It is no wonder that with this wide range of teaching and its supernal message, it is the most beloved scripture of India. Its other qualities too are remarkable,—its great beauty of form, its deep earnestness, its noble spirit of toleration and its fundamentally rational philosophy. In this combination of varied qualities, it is unique among the scriptures of the world.

II. THE STARTING POINT OF THE GITA

Arjuna's very approach to the moral problem is vitiated by a wrong view of man. It is that of the materialist. Sri Krishna chafes him for exaggerating a physical transition of death into an extinction, as if the body were everything and man no more than a physical phenomenon. Sri Krishna eradicates this view, once and for all. In several verses, which are rarely equalled in all the sacred literature of India for their solemn sense of certitude, he declares the supremacy of mind over matter, and the immortality of man. Neither war nor capital punishment is the problem and starting point of the Bhagavadgita. It

starts with a fundamental negation of the materialistic approach of Arjuna.

III. THE EMPIRICIST BASES OF DUTY

But, for a moment, the Gita lingers on this viewpoint to show how even according to it Arjuna should not shirk his duty. 'If thou thinkest of man as being constantly born and constantly dying, even then, O mighty-armed, thou shouldst not grieve.' (II. 26.) If the main thought is of pleasure, then too, his duty and profits are clear. 'Slain, thou wilt obtain heaven; victorious, thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore stand up, O son of Kunti.' (II. 37.)

IV. THE YOGA OF SRI KRISHNA

But these are not the highest considerations, declares Sri Krishna. 'All these are only in the manner of the Sankhya doctrine.' The real origin of duty lies elsewhere, in Yoga. Not in some empirical doctrine of change or the hedonistic doctrine of personal profit does duty find its true origin and inspiration. These lie in the Pure Reason of the self, the Buddhi which is the very essence of the self. This moral Practical Reason is not the formal Reason of Logic but the cultivated rational self-contemplative of the highest realities. (II. 44.) It is in the nomenclature of the Gita, the

Buddhi which is *vyavasaya atmika* and *samadhi sthita*. This orientation of conduct, Sri Krishna calls by the name of Yoga. So important is this principle in the Gita that the whole poem is called the science of Yoga (besides an Upanishad), and every section of it is named a species of Yoga, like the Yoga of the discrimination of qualities, the Yoga of Arjuna's dejection, etc.

This new attitude of Yoga is the basis not only of morality but also of religion. Verses II. 42-43 explain how religion is not mere ceremonialism or a pious bargaining of benefits here and hereafter, but a free expression and development of man's highest qualities.

The refrain of the Gita teaching therefore is 'Take thou refuge in the Buddhi. Pitiable are they whose motive is only greed for results.'

V. YOGA AS ACTION

Though the moral centre of gravity is shifted inward, external conduct is not any the less necessary. The Yoga of Sri Krishna is intensely active. Yoga, he defines as expertness in action. 'Do not be inactive (a non-actor); action is necessary even for the deity. Push on with the wheel of life. Life cannot exist without action.' (III. 16 ff.)

But of what form is action? Sometimes it is a positive deed that is required of us; and sometimes the restraint of a deed. It is possible to make either of these good or bad. 'Subtle indeed is the path of conduct. One must learn to discriminate action and inaction, and evil action.' (IV. 17.)

VI. YOGA AS EQUILIBRIUM

But in one sense,—a sense peculiar to Indian thought—all genuine moral activity has an element of inactivity. (IV. 18-21.) Its heart is a steady equipoise, the peace and satisfaction of disinterested action. Yoga is defined in this aspect of it, as equilibrium. (II. 48.)

VII. YOGA AS ONE'S DUTY IN SOCIETY AND STATION

The Yoga of Sri Krishna is not a mental gymnastic but the leavening of the whole individual by his higher reason; the orientation of his temperament, capacities and social opportunities by the Buddhi. No one need go wandering in search of duty. In his own station in society, his own stage of life, his own temperament and capacity, each one finds his duties. There cannot be a uniformity of conduct among all persons. Men and situations vary; and so do their duties vary. Duty is relative. The formula, 'My station and its duties' would be a good abbre-

viation of the moral standard, if only we would not over-emphasize mere birth and custom, mere heredity and tradition, in the determination of one's station and his duties. These are of course relevant and powerful factors in their determination, but not to the extent of sacrificing individual freedom or the common progress.

The European thinker who comes nearest to the Gita teaching of the Yoga of duty is the 19th century German philosopher, Kant. He rigorously eschewed pleasure and all external considerations from the determination of duty. He found its true basis in the Pure Reason. But he interpreted it too narrowly as a principle of uniformity or inner sovereignty. He was obliged to supplement it with a concrete objective principle like a 'kingdom of rational ends'. Nevertheless his attitude remained formal and abstract. He laid far too little emphasis on the concrete embodiment of duty and its wide diversity or relativity.

But the Gita lays special emphasis on these aspects. It points out not only the relativity of morality but also of religion. Men's methods of approach to the highest—the good and the infinite—are as different as their capacities and situations.

VIII. TOLERATION

This recognition issues in a great and noble toleration. It is not a spirit of weak compromise with evil or an indiscriminate eclecticism of good and bad. It is a very determinate appreciation of genuine moral relativity. The Gita is uncompromising with evil. It fixes the limit of toleration at the dividing line between the divine and the demoniac.

IX. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOKA SANGRAHA

Besides the principle of one's station and its duties, the Gita prescribes the ideal of *lokasangraha*, the general welfare, the commonweal. This is in a sense included in the former. The duties of our stations do certainly contribute to the general welfare. At least they are meant to do so in every well-organised and progressive society. Division of labour and co-operative effort are all intended for securing the general good. So the Gita points to this as the deeper principle of the customary duties. It saves morality not only from the tyranny of custom but also from the revolts of individualism.

It is the rudder and compass of moral conduct. Its aspects are not defined in detail in the Gita. We are given no practical help in defining the general welfare or choosing

the means to it. But the general technique and principle are clear. Verse VI. 25 teaches 'Little by little, tranquil and steadied by Reason, the mind set on the true ideals of the spirit, let him not be diverted by anything else.' (Vide also 28 ff). This is not a principle of some inner meditation but the very heart of the Yoga of Sri Krishna. It applies to the whole of life, individual and social. It is the inmost soul of India. Though in its spirit of caution, there may be the germ of deterioration into an 'unchanging East' or 'the slow moving East.' there is in it also that priceless devotion to humanistic ideals, whose world-wide propagation is such a burning problem to-day.

X. THE OBJECTIVE VALIDITY OF GOODNESS

In verse VI. 37, Arjuna raises the question of the failure of moral effort. It is a problem which cuts at the very root of morality, asking if it is not a mere man-made bogey. Many a moral enthusiast has been chilled by this sceptical question. Even of the Christ it is said that in a mood of moral despair, he cried out from the Cross that God had forsaken him. The problem of objectivity is vital to ethics. Sri Krishna points to two objective principles, the law of karma and the law

of moral or divine incarnation. The first is the principle of moral retribution and the second, the periodic 'emergence' of the moral hero, culminating in a Buddha or a Christ or such another. On the workings of the law of karma, Sri Krishna teaches in tones of the deepest affection, 'O son of Pritha, neither in this world nor in the life to come is there destruction for him; never doth any who worketh righteousness, O beloved, tread the path of woe. (VI. 40 ff.) On the other principle too, he is equally emphatic. 'When evil grows and good is trampled down' there occurs an influx of divinity to restore the balance of good. (IV. 7-8) The world is not endlessly weak and plastic to evil. Somewhere a point is reached when the deeper conscience stirs, and, rising, roots out the evil. Then occurs a new rallying of the forces of good, and the birth of an 'inspired' leader leading the way to a better order. Morality is not left to fight a losing battle with evil. Its end is not the result of chance, but ordered by the laws of cosmic evolution. Karma is the extension of the law of cause and effect to the moral world; and the principle of divine incarnation, the extension of the biological law of 'emergents' in evolu-

tion. Modern science admits their operation in the world of physics and biology but not yet in human life.

XI. THE BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE YOGA

The moral teaching of the Gita is further strengthened by a metaphysical discourse on ultimate reality. 'I will declare to thee this knowledge and wisdom in its completeness' says Sri Krishna; and draws the broad outlines of a metaphysic of the Absolute. He goes on to represent this Ultimate also in concrete terms, as Father and Mother, Friend and Guide and the True Beloved. He gives too a unique vision of the Infinite,—which however the pupil finds too difficult for his finite modes of imagination. He goes further still and indicates a simple technique of meditation, urging the pupil to go slow and not get dispirited. He teaches further that morality refers to the whole of conduct and not to three-fourths or any vulgar fraction of it, and cautions him on the details of food, modes of charity, speech, worship, ritual and austerities.

Thus the Gita ranges over a whole philosophy of life. For a single poem, its scope is amazingly comprehensive. No vital aspect of philosophy or religion or ethic is left outside its scope. And the whole

teaching is given in no spirit of dogmatism but of rational inquiry in close touch with experience. 'You have had all this teaching' concludes Sri Krishna, 'Ponder over it deeply in all its aspects. Then do as seems best to you.'

There have been deep discussions on many special points of this great philosophical poem. There have been various readings and rescensions of it; commentaries by the masters of Ve-

danta, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and others. But its essential moral teachings stand out clear. Sanjaya, who repeated the whole teaching to the blind king Dhritarashtra concludes 'Where Yoga is joined to action, where Krishna the lord of Yoga and Arjuna the bearer of the bow stand, there is victory, prosperity, happiness and firm morality.' Here indeed is the heart of the Gita.

WHEN THE SEED HAS BEEN SOWN

(Some Reflections on the reactions of Western aspirants to Indian spiritual teachings and Sadhana.)

By W. H. Koch

"As the one ocean is of all rivers, so Thou, O Lord, art the one goal of all men who take to the several paths, straight or winding, according to their different tendencies." (*Shiva Mahimna Stotra*.)

Very often, especially in these days of sorrow and anguish and heavy uncertainty weighing on all, one meets people who ask in almost defiant words, "But what has the message of India, the message of Vedanta or whatever you call it, done for you? What good do you get out of this new 'sect'?"

And quite naturally these questions set one thinking in order to define at least to a certain extent what really has changed or is in the process of changing in the inner life of the aspirants and in their reactions to the troubles and difficulties and innumerable frustrations of phenomenal life, and what really does form the attraction of this new "sect" for them.

The following reflections are not exhaustive, but rather fragmentary side-lights thrown on some aspects

of this development. However they may be of interest to the Indian reader who is interested in his own spiritual tradition and culture and in the awakening of true spirituality wherever it be. And they are meant as a small tribute to the Indian spiritual teachers who worked or are still working among us in Europe, and to their untiring love, patience and service. The writer would like to mention at the same time that he is not blind to certain weaknesses and degenerate forms of popular Hinduism, and that when he speaks about the uniqueness of true Indo-Aryan teachings he means the higher unadulterated forms and not certain aspects of present-day Hindu society for which Vedanta cannot be made responsible. He is not idealising a pleasant day-dream of his that has no counterpart in reality.

In the Bhagavadgita there is a beautiful verse where Sri Krishna says, "In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way do I fulfil their desires; it is My path that men

tread in all ways", which gives the chief characteristic of Indo-Aryan teachings in a nutshell, as it were: tolerance and the truth of many paths leading to the Highest.

The Western mind being so narrow and cramped in religious matters—even if this finds its expression in a rabidly atheistic attitude—so dominating and intolerant in its whole outlook, so cocksure in its surmisings, what first strikes the sincere seeker coming in touch with higher Indian thought is the wideness and the all-embracingness of Indian spiritual conceptions and symbols, and the spirit of brotherhood, of intimate comradeship with all beings, not only with man or one's own race or nationals or tribe or family. And here, it must be noted, lies a great difference between higher Hinduism and the message of Christianity as ordinarily understood, and the Semitic faiths, in spite of such lovable figures as St. Francis of Assisi and his early disciples and brethren who, too, had come to recognise the sacredness of all life, not only of a particular expression of life, a difference that makes these faiths even if sincerely applied to daily conduct preach the common sonship of man with reference to God but not the common brotherhood of all sentient beings from the little lichen hidden away in the deep shadow of some precipitous rock, the tiny flower struggling for warmth and moisture high up in the crevices and rifts of some towering peak, the moss-strewn carpets of woods, up to the Highest Existence that is not different from all this vast struggling stream of life and yet transcends it in its eternal majestic calm and peace.

So, in certain respects, there can be cruelty and ruthlessness, there can be *himsa* in the followers of these faiths, for according to Semitic conceptions of life the universe has been created for man to enjoy and to use and to dominate for his own ends, whereas in the higher forms of Hinduism including the

Indian heterodox systems of Jainism and Buddhism, man, if he really is man, is the servant of creation, of all this struggling world of sentient life, one in essence with all, in a spirit of comradeship and intimacy and freedom, as long as he is within the domain of Maya and still part of Maya's multi-coloured never-ending play.

Outwardly this may often have taken forms of expression that seem incomprehensible to the Westerner who has not taken any trouble to get at the inner significance of the rites and customs he finds so strange. So, many scoff at the idea of the cow being holy, seeing a very crude and low form of idolatry in it, and yet not asking themselves if their own forms of idolatry and the terrible manifestations in the outer world that are rolling over man and beast in our day as in the past are not worse, not infinitely lower than the most primitive forms of fetishism and blind image-worship. For such people do not realise the beauty, the deep spirit of veneration underlying the holy symbol that brings the awareness of the oneness and interdependence of all life to the sincere and thoughtful aspirant and to those whose hearts are too simple and whose minds are too poorly trained to follow the abstract flights of philosophic speculation of higher Vedantic thought.

There are many others again who feel horrified at the wonderful symbol of Kali shedding boons and destruction on the world, but only to lead life back to its source, once its erratic wanderings are ended,—this symbol that is brought forward by many to explain the revulsion they feel at Indian idolatry, as if India adored Evil and the forces of Evil in the form of Kali, not recognising here the most marvellous symbolic description ever conceived, because such people are too shallow to renounce their pleasant feeling of superiority based on a comfortable ignorance, and to get at the real meaning expressed in and through the symbol. And yet these very

same people are not easily horrified at their own conceptions of life, and the expressions they find, so long as they can snugly retain the Sunday goody-goodyism in their so-called religion.

In many cases Indian philosophy, whether based on the Upanishads or not, forms the first point of contact and attraction and exerts a special charm on the Western mind, but after that it is the practical side of spiritual life, freed from all dogmatic trammels and hair-splitting, and above all the wonderful lives of India's illumined sons and seers of the past and the present that captivate the heart of the Western aspirant and slowly draw him closer to the Indo-Aryan conceptions of true spirituality.

As to philosophy, the average Westerner is a sceptic, and rightly so. He finds philosophy may posit anything and everything, prove and disprove anything in its own field without in the least affecting the life of the philosopher or that of his students, which in the West philosophy has no intention of doing.

This fundamental difference finds its expression in the very terms used: "philosophy, i.e., love of wisdom intellectually conceived, and *darshana*, something that is actually beheld by the seer or sage in a state of super-consciousness, not something that is painstakingly thought out, no mere thought-construct. There lies a deep and unbridgeable chasm between an intellectual thought-construct and a system based on the higher forms of direct intuitive perception. So, leaving aside some unimportant squabbles of hairsplitting pundits that pass like thistle-down blown along with the wind, Indian thought in spite of its ramifications and variety has in most cases steered clear of the danger of scholasticism crippling the minds of its adherents through a forced and pre-established system of dogmas imposed by some outside ecclesiastical authority. There is no doubt that certain lifeless and ossified dogmas must be the

precipitate of actual spiritual experiences of their first formulators where they were not formulated to support the vested interests of some church. Not that every dogma is a purely mental construct, but it can be a formulation of some knowledge preserved in the deeper strata of human consciousness of which the real significance has been lost. But it is just this decaying husk that is so poisonous for the mind of man.

And Religion must throw off these husks again and again in order to remain alive and to bring real blessing and peace to the human heart. That is why Sri Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita, "For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of *Dharma*, I come into being in every age", which means that divine manifestation is a ceaseless flow continuing all through the ages, not just one revelation for all times, that has been deposited in any one moth-eaten book once for all.

While we are on the track, the same peak may appear quite different from different sides and altitudes, but once we know it to be the same peak we shall not quarrel with those climbing up from any other side along level or precipitous paths, but on the contrary rejoice in their endeavour and steadfastness and determination to reach the goal, and lend them a helping hand whenever and wherever it is possible for us to do so.

How deeply and beautifully significant in its simplicity is the story of the chameleon Sri Ramakrishna used to tell his disciples! It should be written in all hearts and make them realise the true nature of Religion, and abandon their petrified clinging to some favourite outward form, to the shrivelled husk of religion, which is always something lifeless as soon as the spirit of love and kindness and sympathy for all has fled and been replaced by empty self-righteous assertions of bigots and fanatics,—

as soon as the peak has been lost sight of and a particular path put in its place and worshipped.

That is why in an age lacking all true tolerance and raising violence to the throne of the Divine, bowing down to it in many hideous forms and wafting the sickening incense of human blood and suffering before this idol, it is India alone that has preserved through thousands of years the most precious treasures of humanity for the world, and that really possesses the message that might bring new light to the tired hearts of men and women bowed down under the weight of their own helplessness and despondency.

And India does not stand for superficial eclecticism, nor for some hazy indefinite pantheism deifying everything, but her spiritual message is a paean of purity, of *ahimsa*, of loving kindness towards all beings, of the eradication of hatred and greed and irrational animal impulse and their transmutation into something holy. It is a shifting of consciousness away from the brute in human form that lives in every man, coupled with a conscious expanding and widening of outlook, creating the instrument for the Higher to express Itself through. And this, at the same time, fosters real understanding of others, of their strength and their weakness and their manifold perplexities without condemnation and yet without covering the decaying corpse with fragrant flowers and saying it is not there.

This technique of focussing the consciousness on higher planes and preventing the energy from flowing along wrong tracks, is of the greatest importance in human development and very, very necessary. For there should be strong, passionate desire in man that can be transmuted into a blazing, all-consuming passion for his *Sadhana* and thereby take him to the goal. But without the shifting of the centre of one's consciousness, any strong passionate desire will take one down and down and entangle one more and more in

the meshes of one's weaknesses, and in the end kill all higher awareness through its steady poison.

In the field of spirituality there is nothing that possesses deeper grandeur and majesty than the wideness of Indo-Aryan tolerance regarding the different paths to be trodden on the way to the goal and the different techniques to be used. There is no forcing a particular temperament into an ever equal strait-jacket and thereby crippling it and paralysing its spiritual sensitiveness instead of making it fully come to life and expand. And true expansion of consciousness means at the same time understanding toleration and intensity. For expansion reveals deeper levels of beauty and freedom and changes the heart of the aspirant in a most natural way without any strain, though its process may be slow and obstructed by all sorts of set-backs and quite imperceptible during the first years of his attempts at *Sadhana*.

It may be that certain points and truths of Indo-Aryan teachings contain a directness and freshness for the Western student which they no longer possess for the Indian aspirant, just as an unbiased Indian mind will react in a better and purer way to the true message of Christ than any Western heart, distorted, mutilated, endlessly diluted, violated in its deepest spirit and significance as this message has become through the ceaseless squabbles of Christ's so-called followers and through the almost unanimous betrayal of his spirit by the different forms of institutional Christianity kowtowing to the powers that be, in their own self-interest as worldly organisations.

It might be objected that Christ, too, taught many of the truths found in the words of the great Indian teachers, but unfortunately the tradition has been buried under layers and layers of noxious weeds and accretions, of unchristian life and unchristian thought, and ruthless self-assertion, and exclusiveness even in religious circles, and

above all by the great betrayal Christianity committed for worldly gain in the time of Constantine the Great, so well described in Prof. Heering's book *De Zondeval van het Christendom* (The Fall of Christianity), published some years back in the Netherlands.

And there is one more point to note. To many, tired as they are of the cruelty and the ruthlessness of modern Western life, there are too many passages of condemnation and judgment even in the Bible that repel them and do not contain the marvellous all-embracing compassion found both in some of the old Indian books and in the Indian spiritual messengers and God-men of our day. It may be that these passages are not really genuine, but an expression of rather primitive feeling and vindictiveness interpolated and added in later years by the compilers after Christ's passing away; or that Christ had to use such crude means if he wanted to be understood by his followers, but that he himself was above such sweeping forms of condemnation and exulting vindictiveness. But no one really knows, nor shall we ever be able to know.

No great Indo-Aryan book would ever proclaim such self-righteous ruthlessness as found in many passages of the Revelation of John of Patmos, and gloated over by hundreds of petty minds that find in them a justification and even glorification of their own resentments, because the Indian mind would refuse to accept it as a profound spiritual message. To it, the Divine is too great and too full of harmony to condemn life eternally in whatever form it may appear because of the errors it may have committed this time during this incarnation. To many thoughtful persons in the West this seems almost the worst blasphemy man can hurl against the Divine: eternal damnation and wrath and this petty gloating over the damned that cannot even be found among decent human beings leading quite

an ordinary life, and having no spiritual interests whatever.

How great and deeply moving is the conception of Sri Krishna and Arjuna on the battle-field of life, the Divine Friend and Charioteer showing his bewildered comrade the path to truth and right action in words of wisdom and love, not wrathful, not condemning in sweeping words, but full of compassion and insight into the difficulties of Arjuna, of man in the clutches of ignorance, yet ever the son of light.

It might certainly be said that wherever there is and in whatever form there is condemnation or the idea of eternal damnation with all that it implies, there the message of the Divine is not, but there is the stunting and poisonous hatred and the petty vindictiveness of a cramped and frustrated human mind.

So both the tolerance of Indo-Aryan spiritual truths and the *Sadhana* are needed, and all those in the West who really inwardly come in touch with the old Indian traditions feel that something is slowly changing in them like tiny cotyledons unfolding themselves after a long period of darkness and germination and turning their as yet helpless but living nakedness to the light of the sun. This unfolding of the cotyledons is scarcely perceptible at the very beginning. They do not show promise of any particular shape, but remain rather indefinite, weak little things; and yet there is in them that marvellous inner power that shall make them grow and become plants and even mighty trees giving shelter to other lives.

This change in those aspirants who have really been going on steadily with their *Sadhanas* according to the individual instructions they have been given may be very small and fragile, a thing to be hedged round by strong protective fencing, but deep down in their inner being something has come to life, something that gives poise and certitude within certain limits even to the beginner, and that is unfold-

ing itself and growing as life goes on. And for the West the outstanding point in the spiritual message of India as a whole and in the particular message of Sri Ramakrishna must remain the stress on personal *Sadhana*, on self-effort, on trying to achieve realisation in this very life, and at the same time testing every religious dogma and assertion before accepting it, though the aspirant may accept it for a time as a working theory to see where it leads, an idea wholly foreign to the religious mentality of the West. And even those who do not care for Vedanta as such, as a philosophy, can become children of Sri Ramakrishna with joyful hearts, taking him as the teacher and friend

who shows them the way and who through his own spiritual experiences has made it possible for them to find the path that suits their tendencies and yet to greet all Incarnations including Christ as the messengers of truth and all sincere spiritual souls as their fellow-travellers and fellow-experimenters trying to climb the same peak though maybe from different sides and along wholly different paths. This feeling of fellowship is a wonderful help and incentive to the beginner, and, at the same time, it makes him tolerant and wide and kindly towards all life that seeks the Divine in however imperfect or small or erroneous a way it may happen to be.

(To be concluded.)

ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

Aldous Huxley

(Reproduced from *Vedanta and the West*)

The vocabulary of even intelligent and well-educated people is full of words and phrases which they glibly use without ever having troubled to analyze them or exactly determine their meaning. One could fill an entire volume with a discussion of such commonly used, but undefined and unanalyzed phrases. Here, however, I propose to deal with only one of them, the phrase "life of action," so frequently used, in discussions of spiritual religion, in contradistinction to the "life of contemplation." What exactly does this phrase mean? And, passing from the sphere of words to the spheres of facts and values, how is action related

to contemplation, and how ought the two to be related?

In ordinary language, "life of action" connotes the sort of life led by film heroes, war correspondents, business executives, politicians and so forth. Not so in the vocabulary of the religious life. To the religious psychologist the "active life" of common speech is merely worldly life, lived more or less unregenerately by people who have done little or nothing to rid themselves of the "Old Adam" and to establish contact with ultimate reality. What the religious psychologist or theologian calls "active life" is the life of good works. To be active is to follow the way of Martha, who ministered to

the needs of the master, while Mary (the personification, in the West, of the contemplative life) sat and listened to his words. So far as the contemplative is concerned, the "active life" is not the life of worldly affairs; it is the life of consistent and strenuous virtue.

Pragmatism regards action as the end and thought as the means to that end; and contemporary popular philosophy accepts the pragmatist position. In the philosophy underlying Eastern and Western spiritual religion this position is reversed. Here, contemplation is the end, action (in which is included discursive thought) is valuable only as a means to the beatific vision of reality. "Action," wrote St. Thomas Aquinas, "should be something added to the life of prayer, not something taken away from it." This is the fundamental principle of the life of spiritual religion. Starting from it, practical mystics have critically examined the whole idea of action, and have laid down rules for the guidance of those whose concern is with ultimate reality rather than the world of selves. In the following paragraphs I shall summarize the Western mystical tradition in regard to the life of action.

In undertaking any action, those whose concern is with spiritual religion should model themselves upon God himself; for God created the world without in any way modifying his essential nature, and it is to this kind of action without attachment or involvement that the mystic should aspire. But to act in this way is impossible except for those who devote a certain amount of time to formal contemplation and who are able in the intervals constantly to "practise the presence of God." Both tasks are difficult, especially the latter, which is possible only to those far advanced along the road of spiritual perfection. So far as beginners are concerned the doing even of good works may distract the soul from God. Action is safe only for proficients in the art of mental prayer. "If we have gone far in orison," says one Western authority, "we shall give much to action; if we are but middlingly advanced in the inward life, we shall give ourselves only moderately to outward life; if we have only a very little inwardness, we shall give nothing at all to what is external." To the reasons for this injunction already given, we may add others of a strictly utilitarian nature. It is a matter of experience and observation that well-inten-

tioned actions performed by ordinary, unregenerate people, sunk in their selfhood and without spiritual insight, seldom do much good. St. John of the Cross put the whole matter in a single question and answer. Those who rush headlong into good works without having acquired through contemplation the power to act well—what do they accomplish? "*Poco mas que nada, y a veces nada, y aun a veces dano.*" Little more than nothing, and sometimes nothing whatever, and sometimes even harm. One reason for hell being paved with good intentions is to be found in the intrinsically unsatisfactory nature of actions performed by ordinary unregenerate men and women. That is why spiritual directors advise beginners to give as little as possible to external action until such time as they are fit to act profitably. It is a noteworthy fact that, in the biographies of the great Christian mystics the period of activity has always been preceded by a preliminary stage of retirement from the world—a period during which these contemplatives learned to practise the presence of God so continuously and unwaveringly that the distractions of outward activity were powerless any longer to draw the mind away from

reality. Indeed, for those who have reached a certain degree of proficiency in "active annihilation," action assumes a sacramental character and becomes a means for bringing them nearer to reality. Those for whom it is not such a means should refrain as far as possible from action—all the more so since, in all that concerns the saving of souls and the improving of the quality of people's thoughts and behaviour, "a man of orison will accomplish more in one year than another man in all his life."

What is true of good works is true, *a fortiori*, of merely worldly activity, particularly when it is activity on a large scale, involving the co-operation of large numbers of individuals in every stage of unenlightenment. Good is a product of the ethical and spiritual artistry of individuals; it cannot be mass-produced. This brings us to the heart of the great paradox of politics—the fact that political action is necessary and at the same time incapable of satisfying the needs which called it into existence. Even when it is well-intentioned (which it very often is not), political action is foredoomed to a partial, sometimes even a complete self-stultification. The intrinsic nature of the human instruments with which, and the human mate-

rials upon which political action must be carried out, is a positive guarantee against the possibility of such action yielding the good results expected of it.

For several thousands of years now men have been experimenting with different methods of improving the quality of human instruments and materials. It has been found that something can be done by strictly humanistic methods, such as the improvement of the social and economic environment and the various techniques of character training. With certain individuals, too, startling results are obtainable through conversion and catharsis. All these methods are good so far as they go; but they do not go far enough. For the radical and permanent transformation of personality, only one effective method has been discovered—that of the mystic. The great religious teachers of East and West have been unanimous in asserting that all human beings are called to achieve enlightenment. They have also unanimously asserted that the achievement of enlightenment is so difficult, and demands a degree of self-abnegation so horrifying to the average unregenerate human being, that, at any given moment of history, very few men and

women will be ready even to attempt the labour. This being so, we must expect that large-scale political action will continue to yield the profoundly unsatisfactory results it has always yielded in the past.

The contemplative does not work exclusively for his own salvation. On the contrary, he has an important social function. At any given moment, as we have seen, only a few mystical, theocentric saints exist in the world. But few as they are, they can do an appreciable amount to mitigate the poisons which society generates within itself by its political and economic activities. They are the "salt of the earth," the antiseptic which prevents society from breaking down into irremediable decay.

This antiseptic and antidotal function of the theocentric saint is performed in a variety of ways. First of all, the mere fact that he exists is extremely salutary and important. The advanced contemplative is one who is no longer opaque to the immanent reality within, and as such he is profoundly impressive to the average unregenerate person, who is awed by his presence and even by the mere report of his existence into behaving appreciably better than he otherwise would do.

The theocentric saint is generally not content merely to be. He is almost always a teacher and often a man of action. Through teaching, he benefits surrounding society by multiplying the number of those who undertake the radical transformation of their character and thus increases the amount of anti-septics and antidotes in the chronically diseased body politic. As for the action into which so many advanced contemplatives have plunged, after achieving "active annihilation"—this is never political, but always concerned with small groups or individuals; never exercised at the center of society, but always on the margin; never makes use of the organized force of the state or church but only of the non-coercive, spiritual authority which belongs to the contemplative in virtue of his contact with reality. It is a matter of plain historical fact that the greatest of the world's spiritual leaders have always refused to make use of political power. No less significant is the fact that, whenever well-intentioned contemplatives have turned from the marginal activities appropriate to spiritual leaders and have tried to use large-scale action to force an entire society, along some political short cut, into

the Kingdom of Heaven, they have always failed. The business of a seer is to see; and if he involves himself in the kind of God-eclipsing activities which make seeing impossible, he betrays not only his better self, but also his fellow men, who have a right to his vision. Mystics and theocentric saints are not always loved or invariably listened to; far from it. Prejudice and the dislike of what is unusual may blind their contemporaries to the virtues of these men and women of the margin, may cause them to be persecuted as enemies of society. But should they leave their margin, should they take to competing for place and power within the main body of society, they are certain to be generally hated and despised as traitors to their seership. Only the greatest spirituals are fully consistent. The average, unregenerate person loves the thoughts, feelings and actions that poison society, but also, and at the same time, loves the spiritual antidotes to the poison. It is as a poison-lover that he persecutes and kills the seers who tell him how to make himself whole; and it is as one who nostalgically yearns for vision that he despises the potential seer who forfeits his vision by wrong activity and the pursuit of power.

VIEWs AND PRACTICES OF THE ZEN MONKS

By V. S.

From South India, a Buddhist monk, called Bodhidharma, arrived in China in 520 A. D., impelled by the zeal to spread the religion of Righteousness in that country. His teachings remained silent for over a century and a half before it emerged from the crucible of Chinese psychology in the form of Zen, a word connected with *dhyan* and used in the sense meditation or contemplation. Zen is a discipline of life and not a mere philosophy. The aim of the discipline is to grasp the truth of *sunyata* or Absolute emptiness without the mediacy of the intellect or logic. It is the life of *prajna-paramita*, an ultimate psychological experience in which mind and body dissolve and by which all our ordinary ways of looking at the world undergo a fundamental transformation. It is not a mere vacuous experience of a contentless inanity, but a profound view of life and its environments. This Chinese *modus operandi* of Buddhism passed on to Japan in the thirteenth century and was embraced by the military class. The new spirit infused into the religious consciousness of Japan in one of its most vigorous and creative periods, through the founding of several monasteries and the emergence of religious schools of varying shades, has helped much to mould the character of the Japanese people and develop their culture. Zen is a living spiritual force in Japan and there are dozens of institutions called the Zendo (Meditation Hall) where regular groups of monks stay and practise the discipline scrupulously. After proper initiation they spend a life of humility, labour, service, prayer, and meditation just like all the other great monastic orders of the world.

The principal Zen temples in Japan have a training station for the monks appended to them. Any monk ordained after the rite of the

Zen will have to submit himself to the disciplining curriculam of such an institution called briefly the Zendo in order to gain any ecclesiastical standing. In these institutions there is a 'spirit of grim earnestness, with which higher truths are sought; there is a determined devotion to the attainment of superior wisdom, which will help to put an end to all the woes and ailments of human life, and also to the acquirement of the fundamental social virtues which greatly pave the way to world-peace, and the promotion of the general welfare of all mankind'. Commercialism and self-advertisement are banned in the Zendo life; even scientific education and comforts and luxuries are interdicted.

In order to get oneself admitted into the community of Zen Brotherhood connected with a given monastery one has, first of all, to provide oneself with a certificate as a regularly ordained disciple of a Zen priest and then get oneself equipped with the scanty articles needed for the austere life of the monk. The charm, the experience, and the educative value of travelling on foot are never missed. Travelling far, the candidate at last presents himself before the authorities of the Dojo (the training place) with his light bundle of necessaries to which he limits his possessions as if he were mutely protesting against the human passion for acquisition. First he is politely but firmly refused acceptance to the Brotherhood. But he continues his supplications without caring even forceful ejection until he is admitted after a short period of trial. After the space of a week or so of probation, during which he is to prove his earnestness for the meditative life, he becomes one of the Brotherhood and is ushered into the presence of the Master of the monastery who begins to instruct and train him. The

psychology of the Zen monk at this period is beautifully described by one of the Chinese masters in the following lines:—

' Determined to leave his parents, what does he want to accomplish ?
He is a Buddhist, a homeless monk now, and no more a man of the world ;

His mind is ever intent on the mastery of the Dharma.

His conduct is to be as transparent as ice or a crystal,

He is not to seek fame and wealth,

He is to rid himself of defilements of all sorts.

He has no other way open to him but to go about and inquire ;

Let him be trained in mind and body by walking over the mountains and fording the rivers ;

Let him befriend wise men in the Dharma and pay them respect wherever he may accost them ;

Let him brave the snow, tread on the frosty roads, not minding the severity of the weather ;

Let him cross the waves and penetrate the clouds, chasing away dragons and evil spirits.

His iron staff accompanies him wherever he travels and his copper pitcher is well filled,

Let him not then be annoyed with the longs and shorts of worldly affairs,

His friends are those in the monastery with whom he may weigh the Dharma,

Trimming off once for all the four propositions and one hundred negations.

Beware of being led astray by others to no purpose whatever ;

Now that you are in the monastery your business is to walk the great path,

And not to get attached to the world, but to be empty of all trivialities ; Holding fast on to the ultimate truth, do not refuse hard working in any form ;

Cutting yourself away from noise and crowds, stop all your toiling and craving."

The chief means of supporting the Zendo life is begging. Begging enjoined upon monks has a two-fold moral significance : (1) The beggar is taught the virtue of humility, (2) the donor is given an opportunity to accumulate the merit of self-denial. The monastery authorities would have soon found means to substitute the economic aspect of begging by some other arrangement ; but this could be done only at the sacrifice of the educative value of begging for the donor and the receiver. For the monks when they went out for begging wore deep hats which did not permit them to see the face of the donor or the latter to recognize the former. Unless the

deed of charity is done altogether free from personal relationships it is apt to lose its spiritual sense. ' It is just an act of favouritism, that is, it harbours in it on the one side the feeling of personal superiority and on the other the degrading consciousness of subserviency.' ' In the autumn the monks go out in the country when the farmers are ready to gather up pumpkins, potatoes, daikons, turnips, and other vegetables. They ask for such as are rejected by the farmers as unfit for the market.' It is evident from this that they were not a burden to the society.

Although begging is their means of sustenance the monks are not

absolved from the life of labour. The first rule of the monastery life is: 'A day of no work is a day of no eating.' When the younger monks wanted to keep away a well-known founder of a Zendo institution from manual labour, the latter insisted 'I have accumulated no merit to deserve service by others; if I do not work, I have no right to take my meal.' The feeling of humility that lay behind the remarkable reply is really amazing. The Zen monks are not mere contemplatives; they engage themselves in physical labour, and handled tools for some practical end, whether in the farm, or in the woods, or in the mountains. Every member of the Brotherhood is expected on the field. 'No distinctions are made, no exemptions are allowed; for the high as well as the low in the hierarchy are engaged in the same kind of work. There is a division of labour, naturally, but no social class idea inimical to the general welfare of the community.' Thus there are several examples where great Zen masters equally employed themselves in the general outdoor labour of every kind along with other monks. They did not regard anything below their dignity; for they were perfectly aware of everything they did with hands or head. 'Each pulsation of the heart, the lifting of the hands and feet, all evoked consideration of a most serious character.' This is living Zen; for nothing can be really learned until it works through the nerves and muscles. When they are exempted from daily routine work they entertain themselves by wrestling matches, scrupulously observing the principles of fairplay.

The monks are not to idle away their precious time in the monastery. Senior monks do in turn, changing twice a year, the work of the steward, cook, shrine-attender, general director, accountant, and the attendant of the members. The meaning of service is to do the work assigned ungrudgingly and without thought of personal reward, material or moral. The only desire the

worker should cherish in the execution of his service is to turn its merits to the general treasure-house of All-knowledge. There is nothing very appealing to the sense of a gourmand in the Zendo pantry, but all care is taken to make the best possible use of the food material given for maintaining the health of the members. "If they could have chance to do good to others in any way they might come across, they should be willing to avail themselves of them and do the work assigned to them to the best of their abilities. The training at the Zendo is not only for the development of a man's inner psychic powers but for that of the moral character as a social being.'

Simplicity and orderliness are the prevailing and most noticeable spirit in all the aspects of Zendo life, but there is no military austerity. When entering and going out they are to salute the deity in the monastery; walking and standing have to be decorous; they are not to walk across the form of the Manjusri's shrine, or to be in a flurry or swaggering when walking on the floor; none are permitted to leave the Hall in meditation house except for interviewing the master; to other necessary movements the intermission hour is to be devoted; while outside, whispering and tarrying are not allowed; when walking they are not to shuffle their sandals; when submitting to the warning stick, they are to courteously fold their hands and bow; they are not to permit any egoistic thoughts to assert themselves and cherish anger; no left-over is to be thrown on the floor; no sundry articles are to be scattered around the seats; even when it is not the meditation hour they are not to pass their time dozing sitting against the wall; at the morning service the dozing monks are severely dealt with; when the meditation hour is over at night, they are to go right to the bed and not to disturb others by sutra-readings, or whispering with neighbouring monks; when the monks

are on their begging round they are not to put their hands outside the dress, or show their arms, or walk the street staggering, or whisper to one another; for such behaviour is damaging to the dignity of monkhood. They are not supposed to visit one another and spend their time in talking idly, cracking jokes, and laughing nonsensically; while sick they are not allowed to read books or be engaged in literary work or pass time in trivial talk; violation of these rules interferes with the welfare of the community and so infringers are expelled speedily after holding the council.

Eating is a solemn affair, though there is not much to eat. The monks are supposed to eat only twice and every meal is very thin as to merit the epithet 'medicine food'. Before they fall to the dishes they recite the sacred texts and follow the five meditations and three vows. The five meditations are: (1) 'Do we really merit this offering? (2) We are seriously made to think of our virtues; (3) The object is to detach ourselves from the fault of greed and other defects; (4) Meal is to be taken as medicine in order to keep the body healthy and strong; (5) We accept this meal so as to make ourselves fit receptacles for the truth.' The vows of each morsel aim at destroying evil, practising all deeds of goodness, and delivering all beings. No words are uttered during the course of eating, everything goes on silently and in the most orderly sequence. The waiters are monks themselves. The bowls are quietly washed and wiped chanting some verses, and along with it all the diners stand and go back to their Hall in perfect order. Nursing the sick is an opportunity for the novitiates to learn to serve his fellow-monks. Even the patient was always made to think of spiritual problems and exercises as he can.

To waste or abuse materials, natural or artificial tantamounts to an offence. Not even a grain of rice or leaf of vegetable was to be thrown

out carelessly. The master of the Kuei-shan monastery said to an inadvertent inmate: 'Don't scatter the grains; for they come from our kind-hearted donors'. Even water thrown out after wash is to be used 'lively'; that is, the efficiency of everything is to be developed to the highest degree. There is an attitude of reverence to Nature and her resources in the Zen view of life. The attitude of reverence towards Nature together with the idea that a man should not eat his meal unless he had something accomplished for the community to which he belongs, forms the foundation of the Zendo life. When one monk does some act of service to the other, the latter folds his hand before him expressing his grateful acknowledgment of the service.

'The Brotherhood is a community of men pursuing one common object, and the spirit of mutual help and service is everywhere evident in Zendo life. ...Each monk, therefore, endeavours on the one hand, to give others the least trouble for his own sake, while on the other hand he will do his utmost to do the most good he can for the general welfare of the community. If service is done with the thought of a reward or without the sense of gratitude and humility, it is not at all service, it is deed of mean commercialism.' The Zen monk is under obligation to be above it; for his life of service is closely related to that of humility and gratitude.

The interior life of the monk is characterised by prayer. His prayer is the uncontrollable outburst of an intensely intimate desire and is in the form of self-reflection and vow or determined will. Two typical extracts adduced below make this amply clear: (a) 'Even when enemies vilify us or torment us in one way or another, let us consider them Bodhisattvas in disguise, whose living hearts endeavour by this means to efface the effects of our evil deeds and thoughts, which we have been constantly committing because of our egotism and pre-

judiced views since the immeasurable past. Let us thus thinking cultivate the virtue of humility in words and deeds and rouse with single-minded thoughts of devotion. The very moment this pure faith is awakened from the depths of our being, a lotus of enlightenment will open up in bloom.' (b) 'My only prayer is to be firm in my determination to pursue the study of truth, so that I may not feel weary however long I have to apply myself to it; to be light and easy in the four parts of the body; to be strong and undismayed in body and mind, to be free from illness, and to drive out both depressed feelings and light-heartedness; to escape every form of calamity, misfortune, evil influence, and obstruction, so that I may instantly enter upon the right way and not be led astray into the path of evil; to efface all the evil passions, to make grow the *prajna*, to have an immediate enlightenment on the matter that most concerns me, and thereby to continue the spiritual life of the Buddhas, and further to help all sentient beings, to cross the ocean of birth and death, whereby I may requite all that I owe to the loving thoughts of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs.'

The monks are constantly reminded by an Inscription that they are not only to be donned in the robe but to have a mind free from all worldly taints; not to waste the day addicted to the pursuit of fame and wealth; never to violate secretly the rules and moral precepts that they outwardly profess; not to be busy with worldly affairs and thus neglectful of disciplining themselves and not to crowd out right knowledge by idle thoughts. Like other monastic orders the Zen monks also have their daily exercise consisting of *sutra*-reading, prayer-recitation, incense-offering, bowing and the rest. But these are to subserve the interior life.

The core of the Zendo life, as has been pointed out, is meditation; lectures and instruction and study

are only subsidiary. The whole community works, eats, sleeps and meditates together in perfect order. A single large hall provides them with the space for meditation and sleep. The object of meditation is to open the *Prajna*-eye with which the meaning of all things are to be known. The meditation starts with enquiry into certain exercises set by the masters. Regarding meditation Ku-mei Yu's advice is: 'What is needed in the beginning is to stir up your spunky spirits and be most resolutely determined to go on with your task. Summarily making a bundle of all you have hitherto understood or learned, together with your Buddhist knowledge, your literary accomplishments, and your clever manipulation of words, sweep it off once for all into the great ocean, and never think of it again. Gathering up eighty-four thousand thoughts into a seat, which enter into every hidden corner of your consciousness, squat on it, and try to keep your *koan* (exercises for meditation) all the time before your mind. Once lifted up before the mind, never let it slip off; try to see with all the persistence you find in yourself into the meaning of the *koan* given to you, and never once waver in your determination to get into the very bottom of the matter. Keep this up until a state of *satori* (understanding) breaks upon your consciousness.... go straight at it without leaning on any kind of intermediary help; for in this way only you can make for your own home...'

The ultimate truth of the teaching is given thus:

'No-ego, and again no-personality, There is neither subject nor object; I advise you; cease further lecturing, And seek the truth without any intermediary; In the *Prajna* itself which is known as *Vajra*, There is not a particle of dust defiling it; From the beginning to the very last, The whole *sutra* is no more than words.'

Zen is intended for the specially gifted minds, and not for the masses. 'Standardization so called goes on everywhere, which means the levelling-down or the averaging-up of inequalities and class-distinctions.' Unless austerity in one form or another is admitted and to a certain extent encouraged, the artistic impulses are suppressed and no religious geniuses will be forthcoming. The truth of the Zen must be preserved in the midst of the prosaic flatness and shallow sensationalism of present-day life. The Zendo life is complete when the truth of *sunyata* is intuitively grasped and it is demonstrated in every phase of practical life and when a great heart of *karuna* is awakened in the way rain falls on the unjust as well as on the just. When the monk has made a great advance in this line he leaves the Zendo and he begins his real life among his fellow-beings as a member of the greater community of the world. 'When he first appeared for admittance into the community, he was regarded almost as a *persona non grata*, and all harsh treatment was accorded to him. But he has successfully buffeted the waves, ridden the storm finally to the harbour of safety and he is ready for his mission among his fellow-beings which he will perform in whatever form he deems most expedient. Such ones are, indeed, to be most enthusiastically greeted by the outside world.'

Zen life is not without the feeling of religious emotions. The monks always live in communion with Nature and their close obser-

vation of Nature finds its way into literature. Their life in the mountain monasteries give them ample opportunities to feel deeply for the clouds, peacefully floating over the refreshingly green mountains, the stream hurriedly running below the porch, the moon bright and serene, shining over peaks after peaks, and the wind blowing rustling through branches of trees two thousand years old. Nature speaks her inmost yearnings directly to their hearts. 'In the waving of a blade of grass the intelligent eye detects a power transcending the vicissitudes of human life. In short, nature beckons them to eternal virtues through her charming visage. The atmosphere of the community is surcharged with this spirit.' The following saying which forms an apt conclusion suggests this atmosphere and opens up a vista of deep significance:

(1) The moon is rising from the ocean and its rays reach far and wide. (2) A silver bag of perfume behind the brocade screen makes the whole avenue odorous as it blows. (3) With one bowl and one staff, I make my home wherever I go. (4) One word out of the mouth and even a team of four horses cannot overtake it. (5) A rootless plant at the top of the mountain; no wind is blowing but see how the leaves sway. (6) Even a fist angrily lifted would not strike a smiling baby. (7) However lovingly cherished flowers soon wither away; however despised and down-trodden weeds never cease to grow.

(Based on *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk* by D. T. Suzuki.)

HOW VALMIKI COMPOSED THE RAMAYANA

By P. A. Subramania Iyer

Tradition has it that the core of the story of Ramayana was imparted by Sage Narada to Bhagavan Valmiki. This is now known as *Sangkshepa Ramayanam*. There is an authority which states that Narada recited to him some *Riks* only, which were afterwards put into the present verse-form by Valmiki. It is usual to state that the meeting between Narada and Valmiki was on the earth below. It seems to me that we may as well say that they met in *Samadhi* state. I shall explain this:

The opening verse in the first *Sarga* of the *Ramayana* may be translated thus:

Valmiki, the Tapasvin, questioned Narada who was devoutly practising Tapas and Svadhyaya, who was well-versed in the *Vedas* and *Sastras* and who was also a *Munipungava*, i.e., one of the best among of Sages. We should now examine the significance of the attributes to the two sages in the above sloka. Sutra 43 of Chapter II of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* has a bearing here. It says that a Tapasvin is possessed of 'the attainments of the physical body, *Anima* and others, and also the attainments of the senses, clairaudience and thought-reading from a distance, etc.' In the light of the above information, we should understand that Valmiki, the purified soul, was in *Dhyana-samadhi* and thought devoutly of Narada, and the latter, being also a purified soul, showed himself in his *Sukshma Sarira*, and then the question was put.

Narada is also described in the above sloka as a *Munipungava* devoutly practising *Svadhyaya*. Sutra 44 of Patanjali says, 'To one who is given to study, the *Ishta-Devata* becomes visible,' and *Sanat-sujatiya* (in the *Mahabharata*) has it that he should be called a *Muni-sreshta* or a *Munipungava* who has seen *Brahman*. *Slokas* 16 and 30

and 22 of the second *Sarga* of the *Ramayana* say that Valmiki also was a *Munipungava*, and given to study.

Valmiki now asked Narada to tell him who in the world at that time was the best *Kshatriya* warrior endowed with all auspicious qualities; and then Narada described to him the qualities of Sri Rama, and also gave in brief the story of his life. This is what we learn from the first chapter of the *Ramayana*.

VALMIKI SEES A TRAGEDY

Valmiki's *samadhi* being over, he started for his bath, accompanied by Bharadvaja, his disciple. Usually he bathed in the *Ganges*, but this day when he came to *Tamasa* river, he resolved to bathe there and said so to his disciple. And then with his bark-cloth in his hand, Valmiki kept strolling about looking all round him. This is what we learn from verse 8 of chapter II. In this verse we should pay particular attention to the expressions—*nityatendriyah* and *ha*. The first signifies one who has attained the power of clairaudience, and the second expresses wonder. We have therefore to infer from this that as Valmiki was going along, he heard a voice which said, 'Bathe in the *Tamasa* today. Before getting into the water, just keep moving about in the grove there,' and he did, accordingly.

Fortunately, there is a commentary to support this inference. It is to this effect: 'Valmiki was to compose the *Ramayana*. The chief sentiment in it is compassion or *Karunarasa*. Sri Rama thought that before Valmiki actually began to compose that work, he should have some personal experience of that rasa, and so came as a hunter and killed the *Krauncha* bird.'

As Valmiki was going along, he saw the tragedy of the male bird being shot down and its mate crying piteously. This sight touched his

heart, and he thought within himself that the hunter was guilty of Adharma, and all on a sudden, most spontaneously, and without any effort on his part, the sage burst out thus: *Manishada pratishtham tvam-agamah sasvati samah yat Kraunchamithunad ekam avadhiham kamamohitam.* 'O hunter, since you have so cruelly killed this one of the loving birds, you will not live long.'

This sounded like a curse and Valmiki felt very sad, for no sage should utter a curse. And looking into his heart—*hridi vikshatah*—he said to himself thus: 'I was only distressed at the sight of this bird. How and why then did I utter this curse?' With this sad thought, Valmiki went deep into his heart, i.e., into samadhi, and then a voice (of Sri Rama) rose which said, 'This is a Mangala (auspicious) Sloka, not any other—*Sloko Bhavatu Nanyatha.*' Pleased at this, he communicated the same to his disciple.

Swami Vivekananda gives the same interpretation as the above in his 'Discourse on the Ramayana.'

Valmiki and his disciple then bathed and returned to the Asrama.

Afterwards the sage sat down, did Svadhyaya and entered into deep meditation. In that state he saw Brahma. Valmiki duly worshipped him and, at the latter's bidding, sat down. He was still wondering how the sloka could form a Mangala Sloka. Brahma smiled—Prahasan—and said, 'This sloka came out of your mouth through my wish. Compose the Ramayana in full, as was heard by you from Narada.'

It was only now that Valmiki realized the full import of this sloka, and the commentators say that, as a Mangala Sloka, it should be interpreted in either of two ways, as noted below:

(a) Oh hunter, Ravana, since you subjected to a most cruel torture the bird Sita of the two birds, Rama and Sita, you will soon die.

(b) Oh Mahavishnu, the abode of Sri, since you killed Ravana of the two birds, Ravana and Mandodari, we pray you may long remain as *Archamurti* in this world enabling us to worship you.

And then under the benign influence of Brahma Valmiki composed the *Ramayana*.

THE TRUE ISLAM

By M. Arif

I may make it clear at the very outset, that all that I shall say of Islam, is according to the interpretation which Ahmad of Qadian, the author and inspirer of the Ahmadiyya movement in agreement with the Holy Prophet Mohamad himself, has given to Islamic teachings.

Islam is the name of the religion which was founded by the Prophet Mohamad, who was born in 570 A. D. at Mecca, a famous town in Arabia. The English speaking people very often call this religion, Mohamadanism and its followers Mohamadans, but the correct name of this Faith is Islam and that of its followers, Muslims.

Our most important and fundamental principle is the unity of God, not only in His essence and person, but also in His attributes. We hold that the prophet's highest mission was to uproot idolatry from the world. The inhabitants of Arabia, where he was born, were so indulgent in it at that time, that, they set apart a new idol for everyday's worship. He was, therefore, bitterly opposed by his countrymen and had to undergo many hardships for the achievement of his noble purpose. He at last, by his sympathetic teachings won the hearts of his enemies who became convinced of the fact that there is only one God and the idols were of no use. The

truth of his teachings very soon enlightened the other nations of the world and Islam was established as a great religion in the very life-time of the holy Prophet.

We regard the Prophet Mohammad as an inspired person and we, in accordance with his teachings, do not confine the favours of God to a particular country or a nation. The Koran says, 'There has been no people in the world but that God raised among them a prophet for their guidance.' In another context it says, 'Verily we have sent prophets to every nation with the message, "Worship God and do not listen to the wicked and the rebellious".' The Koran goes still further when it says that the true believers are those who believe in that which has been revealed to the prophet and in all that was revealed before him. Only such people are rightly guided, and only these can attain salvation and success, which is the ultimate goal of humanity. We are drawn to this new truth which Islam has discovered and Ahmad of Qadian has explained to the world, as the foundations of the common brotherhood of man. According to it a true Muslim can have nothing but reverence for the founders and leaders of other religions. To him Krishna, Rama-chandra, Zoroaster, Buddha and Confucius are as much the prophets of God as Moses and Jesus. In doing so a Muslim, believes in all the holy messengers of God as well as in the scriptures given to them; and thus he shuts out all the avenues of dispute and promotes peace and love among all the nations on the world. How can he do otherwise while the Koran teaches that God is *rabbul-almeen*, the creator and sustainer of all worlds, and that His bounties are not confined to Arabia and Syria. As the sun lights up every corner of the world so must the word of God illumine every valley and give light to all nations.

We do not, however, think that the door of revelation is shut after the prophet Mohammed. Taking in

view the unlimited mercy of God in all ages we are convinced that as He chose some holy persons in the past he still provides the necessary means for the guidance of man. The Koran, the New Testament, the Bhagavadgeeta and other scriptures are clear on this point. Consequently we hold that in every century righteous people have been raised by God after the holy prophet to lead mankind to Him and to uproot evil prevailing among the people. In the present century also, Ahmad of Qadian has appeared, his advent being foretold by the prophet of Islam, as well as by the founders of the other religions.

The Koran is a unique book. It contains definite teachings about every aspect of human life. If it provides us with consummate instructions regarding the spiritual life and the different stages of its progress it does not ignore the social, political and international problems. It teaches us how to become good citizens, it tells us of the rights of our neighbours, fellow citizens and countrymen. It expounds the rights of relatives and goes into detail to explain how we should treat our parents, children husbands, wives and others who are our kin. It lays down rules and regulations about inheritance and thus shuts the door upon disputes. It shows how to live peacefully under the government of the country and at the same time gives command to those who are in authority to govern the country for the benefit of their subjects.

The Koran does not make any racial distinction between people. It denies any superiority of one class over another, of the East over the West or of the West over the East. It says 'O you, who believe let not one people look down upon another, perchance they may be better than they. Surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most pious.'

49-12-30.

The aim of Islam is to establish the principle of the brotherhood of

man. Just as the children of the same father love each other, so the creatures of the same heavenly father should also do.

Having mentioned a few principles and characteristics of Islam I would like to deal in detail with some objections raised, especially in the West, against this religion. I must say that the charge against Islam that it denies the existence of soul in women and deprives them of all opportunity of spiritual advancement is, without the slightest foundation. The five daily prayers, the fasts, the payment of the poor rate, pilgrimage to Mecca which is incumbent on all those who can afford it once at least in a life-time are all obligatory for men as well as for women. The Koran puts the matter beyond all doubt when it says, 'and whoever does good, whether male or female and if he or she is a believer shall enter the paradise.' (ch. 40). The Islamic teachings are so clear on this point that Sir Thomas Arnold had to point out the mistake of some writers on Islam. He says, 'A very common error in European writings on Islam maintains that Mohamadens believe that women have no soul. That this is entirely incorrect is shown by the verse in the Koran which promised the joys of Heaven to women equally with men.' Again a European woman Edith Holland writes, 'We often hear of the subjugation of Eastern women; but this is due more to the general idea in the East of the position of the women than to any regulations made by Mohammad. For he did a great deal to improve the condition of women in Arabia and made various laws for their benefit.' I may be permitted to add here that one of the functions to perform which Ahmad of Qadian has appeared is to uproot the general

idea of the subordinate position of women in the East and give them the status accorded to them by Islam.

Far from accepting the accusation that Islam assigns an inferior position to women we claim that this was the first religion which acknowledged woman's status and accorded an honourable position to her in society. Contrary to the pre-Islamic traditions, Islam gives her the rights of inheritance and specifies her share from property of her parents, children, husband, and other relatives. It describes her full rights against her husband and thus does not leave her at the husband's mercy. I cannot do better than quote one of the non-Muslim scholars who studied the condition of women in Islam. Pierre Crabites in *The Nineteenth Century and After* writes Mohammad according to his lights, and with due regard to the needs of his time and country, was probably the most earnest champion of women's rights that the world has ever known. He found women the property of their kinsmen to be used, sold, or let to hire, like other chattles. He left them possessed of full legal personality and capable of acquiring property and contracting on their own account. So Islam from the beginning has kept in view all stages of human progress and civilization and has provided for them. It cannot, therefore, be called an old religion and it does not leave room for any new one to appear in the field and take its place.

Another charge levelled against Islam is that it is a religion that was propagated by the sword. It can be proved that this statement has little truth in it. The Koran says only 'The truth is from your Lord, let him who will, believe and let him who will disbelieve.'

SAINT TUKARAM

By H. Srinivas

The two outstanding devotional poems that had carried the message of *Bhakti* to the remotest parts of Northern India and Maharashtra and profoundly influenced the life and thought of all classes of people—are the *Ramayana* of Tulasi Das and the *Abhangas* of Tukaram. They are the most widely read, widely sung, and widely assimilated devotional works, and the truths inculcated therein, covering almost the whole range of human life, may be said to have entered into the flesh and bone of Indian religious life. They turned men's minds to a personal God, who draws His erring children to His bosom as a loving and forgiving Father, and as a tender and kind Mother by the ties of love, friendship, benediction and mercy, making them realise that all human beings are members of the same household of God and that the human soul can attain peace and blessedness only by turning to such a personal God in daily meditation, prayer, worship and self-surrender.

Thus Tukaram is the choicest fruit of Bhagavata Dharma, which began with the Saint Dhyaneshwar and spread throughout Maha-

rashtra. He is the best loved and the most widely sung of all the Maharatta poets and his *Abhangas* which are the cream of ancient philosophy and wisdom have a tonic power all their own, ministering to the spiritual needs of all, be they moderns or ancients. Their popularity has continued undiminished until to-day and they are so widely known among all classes of Maharattas that 'many of them have almost come to have the vogue and authority of proverbs'.

Tukaram was the third of the three great men who flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries, which may very well be called the halcyon period of the new Bhakti movement in Maharashtra, the first two being Eknath and Rama Das. It would seem that the Brahmin saint Ram Das and the Sudra mystic Tukaram were born to continue the great work of Eknath. Tukaram was born at Dehu, a small village on the banks of the river Indrayani, about eighteen miles north-west of Poona in the year 1608. He came of a poor family which had followed the trade of grain-selling. Though Sudras and shopkeepers by profession,

Tukaram's ancestors were devout worshippers of Vithoba, and regular visitors to the sacred shrine at Pandharpur, besides being pious and charitably disposed persons. Tukaram lost his parents at a very early age and in the terrible famine that swept over the Deccan in 1629, when he was but 21, his wife Rakhmai and his son Sivaji died of starvation. Harassed by poverty, misery and bereavements, in sheer despair, Tukaram sought consolation in religion, having become sick of the world. Tukaram devoted his life to the complete service of God, conducted *bhajans*, served holy men, and did other virtuous acts.

It is significant, however, that when things bettered, Tukaram married again, a girl by name Jijabai. In spite of this religion became more and more absorbing to Tukaram, with the result that his house and family were neglected. Tukaram had to face all the domestic worries and trials again.

By and by Tukaram was blessed with divine inspiration, and under its influence he composed six to eight thousand poems of which about four thousand are translated into English. Tukaram had a number of disciples, but, being a Sudra, he had to face certain social disabilities enforced on him by the

Brahmins of the town. His manuscript poems were thrown into the Indrayani River. Miraculously, after a fortnight, all his poems in manuscript form came floating to the surface of the river and his popularity and influence was restored.

Tukaram was a contemporary of the great Emperor Sivaji, who paid him several friendly visits, and rendered all necessary help.

Tukaram never founded a cult, swore by no *Guru* and gave no *Diksha*.

Tukaram got strange premonitions of his approaching end, and in one of his *Abhangas* he said: 'I will go now to my mother's house; the Saints have sent for me . . . Now I shall go to the Lord of life whom I shall follow with my whole heart.' He asked his disciples to give him a send-off, and thereafter asked them to return to their homes and blessed them saying: 'Be happy in your deeds and duties'. In a note attached to the little old volume of his poems it was stated: 'Tukaram started on his pilgrimage; farewell'. This was in 1649.

Tukaram left two sons and three daughters. The King, on hearing of his passing, granted them some villages as a jagir for their support.

The whole teaching of Tukaram may be summed up

in the words: 'To realise God and to live in god'. He made current the Vaishnavaite faith whose key-note is love and brotherhood. The merciful and protective aspects of the Divine appealed to him most. He did not wish to be merged in the unconsciousness of Brahman like the dew drop in the silent sea, but preferred to live on earth and have the joy of serving and praising his divine Master. To him the relation of the human soul to God is one of union-in-separateness. As Kabir put it, 'Brahma and the creatures are ever distinct and yet ever united' and 'Not in the monism of Sankaracharya, not in the dualism that is quite satisfied to remain two, but in a spiritual experience that transcends and includes both is peace to be found. It is this view that Tukaram brings home in his *Abhangas* by means of various metaphors. He describes the soul's union with God, as a 'Love-union, a mutual inhabitation'. To him the

worship of God, who is all Love, is a worship of the heart in love and in faith, which is accessible to all, without distinction. According to Tukaram saintly life did not imply the renunciation of those duties which man owes to the world. In other words, renunciation did not mean to him a negative attitude, but the courage to do the right in spite of consequences, and Sainthood is the supplanting of the lower self by the higher, a moral life illumined by the spirit. Unless the heart is purified and it reflects God as in a mirror, mere book-learning does not regenerate the soul, but leads to self-conceit. Tukaram never asked people to renounce the world and family ties, but to think of God ever and anon, to remember Him in all things, and to do the duties trusting Him fully. There is no doubt that what the world needs to-day is the message of Saint Tukaram, which he has sung in a simple way.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Light on the Path of Self-realisation:
(Containing the life sketch of
Shri Gajanana Maharaj and the
spiritual experiences of his dis-
ciples and devotees compiled by
an admirer, and published by
Nagesh Vasudev Gunaji, B.A.,
LL.B., Thalakwadi, Belgaum.
The Popular Book Depot,
Lamington Road, B o m b a y .
Pages Lviii + 367. Price Rs. 3.

The ultimate goal of human life is the realisation of god, and of the many cults that have risen in India for the attainment of this object, that known as the Natha cult or Sampradaya is important in more respects than one. This is prevalent in the Maharashtra and tradition says that it originated with Adinath or Lord Shankara himself and was propagated by the first Natha Sri Machindra. About the end of the 13th century A. D. an off-shoot of this cult named Warkari Sampradaya or Bhagawat Dharma rose into prominence eclipsing to a certain extent its parent, the Natha Sampradaya. The Warkari Sampradaya has accepted in toto the Adwaitic and yogic teachers of the Natha cult, adding Bhakti thereto.

That everyone, whether male or female and of whatever caste has a birthright to obtain knowledge of God is the chief doctrine of the Natha cult. The spiritual aspirant should have a good moral character, respect for social ties, a spirit of renunciation, faith, devotion and belief in god.

The cult advocates Dhyan Yoga or what is called Raja Yoga. The novice is to sit comfortably in any Asana put on 'Jalandhara Bandha' (pressing the chin on the chest), start the Ajapa Japa mentally, and fix attention on any of the six plexuses in the body. The Ajapa Japa is a repetition of the mantra "Om Hamsa Soham", and this repetition, with its consequent concentration of mind, causes vibrations in the region of the *Kundalini*, which is then awakened, and the entrance

to the *Sushumna*, becomes open. When the breath goes up to the *Sushumna*, it becomes united with the mind and begins to work in harmony, thereby enabling the *Sadhaka* to easily fix his mind anywhere he likes.

The real significance of *Soham* is said to be this: " All creatures are taking in and giving out breath. The number of breaths in the whole day amounts to 21,600. The taking in of the breath generates the sound "So" and the giving out generates the sound "Ham." Thus the sound of *Soham* is being continuously generated in every creature, although very few are conscious of it. To be conscious of the sound is the real *Sudarshana* of *Soham*, which means "I am He." *Soham*, therefore, is the sign showing the oneness of Jiva (human soul) and Shiva (Supreme Soul). All knowledge has been centred in *Soham*. All the four Vedas, the *Gita* and the *Gayatri Mantra* tell us nothing except *Soham*. One can accomplish anything by meditating upon *Soham*. Disgust of sexual pleasures, the ending of all Karma, release from the cycle of birth and death, the realisation of self—in short everything can be attained through *Soham*. This is the real Dhyan-Yoga or Raja Yoga." (P. 27.)

Shri Gajanana Maharaj (born 15th August 1892) is the present Sadguru of this cult, living in Nasik. A sketch of his life, how he gained spiritual insight, the narration of the spiritual experiences of as many as 36 of his disciples, and some of the miracles attributed to him occupy a greater portion of the book under review. The Sadguru has not the least paraphernalia of a *Mahant* and looks very simple and unostentatious. He talks freely and without reserve and styles himself and signs as 'Kersuni' (broom), thereby indicating that his principal mission in life is to sweep the minds of his disciples clean and render them fit for self-realisation. His life habits

are simple and he takes meals very rarely—oftentimes going without food for days together. He takes tea many times a day and is fond of smoking now and then all through the day. He is a bachelor in the true sense of the word and shuns limelight.

Though the book is published with a view to help real *Sadhus* on their path to self-realisation, the general public would also find it very interesting.

The printing and neat get up (of the Tatwa Vivechaka Press, Byculla) leave nothing to be desired.

An index would have given greater usefulness to the publication.

S. G. T.

Humanism or The Human Religion :
By Swami Krishnanand. Published by the Vishwa Sewak Sangha, Jawalamukhi (Himalaya). Pages 213. Price Rs. 2-0-0.

All true religions rest on a common bedrock, the conviction of harmony between ourselves and the universe at large. This conviction is the essential corollary of the idea of oneness of the universe, the idea of the One Life in us and in all. Both science and religion are agreed that it is this one life that expresses itself in countless individuals. This compels the recognition of the solidarity of man, the realization that man is part and parcel of One Spirit and One Body. Such a realization can justify itself only by issuing in unselfish love and service of the world, the cosmic body. God hath made us all of one blood; and until we feel the truth, *vasudhaiva kudumbakam*, that the world is our own family, we have not really risen to the *human* point of view at all. The conscious expression of this truth in action is a power that can lead the world to universal brotherhood and peace. For one who has realized this truth, to live to benefit man-

kind becomes the first step. All that is noblest and best in man can be sought this way. 'Heaven or emancipation or whatever you desire can be attained by working for the happiness of the world or redemption thereof, which we call Humanism or the Human religion.' (p. 130) This is the main thesis of the book.

The author assembles all evidence from the great religions of the world, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity to establish his thesis. He devotes two chapters for discussing the contribution which the philosophy of religion has to make towards this grand finale, the establishment of universal brotherhood and peace on earth. The author has some constructive suggestions to offer for bringing the gospel of Humanism into practice. He suggests the creation of a constitution, with village autonomies, and provincial autonomies controlled by a National Assembly.

He proposes 'to organise the people of the world in the democratic model based on the religious principle leading to universal happiness and peace'. (p. 161). In his scheme of things science is assigned the rightful place, for he wants science to be made the hand-maid of material welfare and prosperity. The author's suggestions while embracing all spheres of political and social activity, keeps clear of sweeping, radical changes.

The book is written in simple style. There is a ring of sincerity in the book which the author, a monk, has successfully transferred from his life. It is commendable that the author, at this ripe old age of sixty, is unsparing in his efforts to practise what he preaches and has done his mite for bringing these thoughts together for the edification of the world (*Lokasangraha*).

NEWS AND REPORTS

The Birthday Celebration of Swami Vivekananda

The eightieth Birthday of Swami Vivekananda fell on the 9th January 1942. The occasion was duly observed with worship, Puja, Homam, Bhajana and the distribution of Prasadam to the devotees at the Math. The public function came off on Sunday, the 11th January. There was Bhajana and the feeding of devotees as usual. After Harikatha Kalakshepam by Sri Murthy Rao Bhagavatar, a public meeting was convened in the tastefully decorated hall of the Math, under the presidentship of Justice M. Patanjali Sastriar. Speeches were delivered in Tamil, Telugu and English on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. About 300 devotees took part in the function. In connection with the celebration about 3,000 Daridranarayanas were also fed.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ootacamund Report for the year 1941.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Ootacamund, started in 1926, has been extending its cultural influence among the people of the hills.

Religious Classes.—Three weekly classes were held during the year for the benefit of the public. During summer special classes were arranged for the benefit of the seasonal visitors. A Gita class was also conducted at Coonoor on the 2nd Sunday of every month.

Library & Reading Room.—There is a free Library and Reading Room attached to the Ashrama. The Library contains 1,300 volumes on the great Religions of the world, philosophy, science and art.

During the year propaganda tours were undertaken when the inmates of the Ashrama went out to the other districts to take part in holy gatherings and to give religious discourses.

Elementary School.—The school was opened in August 1939, in the Pancharakshara Hall in the town. There are about 30 children on the rolls at present, and two monastic teachers are working in it.

The Sivaratri, Buddha Jayanti, Sankara Jayanti and Krishnashtami were celebrated at the Ashrama during the year, the most important of the celebrations being the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

The total collections for the year came to Rs. 1,865-13-8 which was spent under different heads. The total expenditure for 1942 is budgeted at Rs. 1,700 and the President appeals to friends and sympathisers for support.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDAJI'S TOUR

Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji, Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited Bankura on the 20th December, 1941. The next morning he performed the opening ceremony of the new Dispensary building of the Mission Sevashrama, and at a public meeting held there on the occasion, presided over by Mr. A. K. Ghosh, District Magistrate, Bankura, and attended by the elite of the town, he spoke on the 'Ideal of Service.' The same afternoon he addressed a ladies' meeting at the town hall, after which he was presented with a civic address at the Municipal Office. The next morning he visited on invitation the Medical School Hospital and spoke to the students. In the afternoon he delivered a lecture at the town hall to the local students, and in the evening addressed a public meeting in the same place the subject being, 'What Swami Vivekananda has done for India.' It was presided over by Rai Bahadur S. K. Sahana.

On the 23rd the Swami paid a flying visit to Jayrambati and on the next day he left for Garbeta, in the Midnapore District, where in the afternoon he addressed a public meeting in the local High School. The next morning he left for Midnapore, where in the afternoon he spoke on "Religion" at the Mission Sevashrama before a distinguished gathering. On the 26th December he held a conversation for the ladies who came to meet him, and returned to Belur the same evening.

The Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 17th of Feb. 1942.

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CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY

By A. S. Narayana Pillai, M.A., M.Litt.

I

Is this the time, you may well ask, to talk of culture—of sweetness and light? We seem to have relapsed into barbarism and lost all human values. Men have been selfish earlier—mean and avaracious. But today selfishness is a religion. We have raised it to the status of a ruling principle. Cruelty has become a creed. Rivers of blood run in three continents: the other two are also threatened. Man fights man with a savagery unknown even among wild beasts.

Is this the time to talk of culture? Yes. It is for those who see the stupidity of it all, and who have not lost all faith in the inherent goodness of human nature to stop and consider. It is for them to

rehabilitate the human values that are being driven out of our lives, to stress man's humanity. From this point of view, I believe that there never was a time when an organised attempt to reclaim humanity back to its human nature was as necessary and insistant as at present. There never was an apter occasion to think of culture and the cultural values.

What is culture? Shortly put, it is the life of the spirit. To be cultured is to live habitually the life of the spirit, to live in the consciousness that our ultimate nature is summed up in our being members of a spiritual kingdom. This consciousness will make us seek occasions and opportunities of expressing

the spiritual nature. It will give us standards with which to measure our actions.

Man is a curious creature, remarkable in constitution. He shares with the animals their appetites and wants, desires and impulses. He needs food and rest, air and water. He resents interference, feels angry and jealous, joyous and miserable. But he is more than a mere two-legged animal. He has in addition what is ordinarily called *reason*. This gives him immense advantages over the animal. His senses may be weaker, his movements slow, his body frail but he scores over the mere animal by virtue of his reasoning faculty. He gets the things he wants and does not wait for nature to deal out her doles. The animal lives on the appetitive level. Man, on the other hand, as a *rational* being, organises and arranges, plans and executes. He schemes and plots, looks before and after.

All this gives him efficiency. But it does not guarantee that it will be used in any particular way. This fact is not realised at all—this fact that reason is like a knife. It is an instrument, keen and handy, but only an instrument. What use is made of it depends on the user. He may use it to kill or to cut the strangling knot.

He is using it to kill. All the wonderful products of this reason—the advance in science and achievements of research—are used for purposes that are inhuman. The razor is in the hands of a monkey. There can be no peace till the razor is wrested from the hands of the monkey or the monkey ceases to be a monkey. We have, as Joad says, gifts fit for gods but we bring to their use the mentality of schoolboys or savages.

What is the remedy? It lies in the recognition of man's true estate, his spiritual nature. We are subjects of the spiritual state. Our ultimate loyalty should be to principles and not to personalities. We must cease to be children of passions and become sons of the spirit, members of a divine order. Man will never discover himself and know his humanity unless he knows that he is divine. This realisation will effect a wonderful change in his life and remodel him thoroughly. He will truly become cultured. Unless culture becomes common and controls men's lives and institutions peace and quiet, happiness and contentment will be unknown.

II

It is a pertinent question to ask what part philosophy plays in a cultured man's life.

What is philosophy? A simple and straight definition is—the search for the significance of the world, the meaning of life. In this sense all of us have our philosophies, our hypotheses of life. Our attitude to life is determined by what we consider is the meaning of life.

This meaning is not given by gathering many facts. Of course, as we come across facts we understand their meaning but facts by themselves do not give their meaning. Science is concerned with gathering these facts which is a very useful work in itself. But the knowledge of these facts is only *information*: philosophy tries to get at their *significance*.

What is life? What does it mean? Does it reveal anything? Can we make any sense of life's stupendous variety, its medley of forms and functions? These are some of the questions that philosophy asks. We may or may not get answers to these questions but you can never say that they are unnecessary. You cannot also deny that they are inevitable. We cannot help asking them. All of us, statesmen and soldiers, sportsmen and politicians,

lawyers and judges, bankers and businessmen will feel the need at *sometime* in our lives to ask these questions. Sports and politics, entertainments and business cannot satisfy us fully. There is a deep hunger in our souls: We feel that there are some things unanswered in our lives which we can only postpone but never ignore. The vacuum in our spiritual consciousness needs filling. There are moments when we feel that we have been running away from ourselves but someday we are caught. We are thoroughly shaken and for the first time we face life fully. We cannot play hide and seek with ourselves. We must know what we are. The success of our enterprise varies but we must undertake it. Philosophy only systematises this search.

III

A cultured life is a balanced life—life in the spirit. It is the life where spiritual values control conduct and guide thought. To live in the spirit is culture: to seek the nature of the spirit is the work of philosophy. Who can say that culture and philosophy are unrelated?

MODERN EDUCATION AS IT HOLDS IN INDIA

By *Swami Ramakrishnananda*

The system of education which is now in vogue, in our schools and colleges, is in its own way, no doubt, very good, but it should be supplemented, a little bit, by an education which will make our boys morally and spiritually more strong. The influence of this materialistic age has permeated almost all of our modern books with which we educate our boys. Positivism is the only theme of all science and philosophy, and sense perceptions are their only standards of judgment. The world is the only thing to be studied, doted upon, and embraced with all one's might; what cannot be sensed must be given up as chimerical, fanciful, and perfectly useless;—this is what the student mostly learns in our schools and colleges.

And what is the result of such an education? He has lost all faith in, and all regard and reverence for, the Eternal Being who disposes and arranges every cosmic particle which, thus moved, creates, preserves, and destroys the universe in infinite space and time. He does not believe that he existed previous to his birth and is to exist after the dissolution of this body. This narrow span of life is all in all to him, which, in his imagination, he regards as permanent, and thus all his hopes and all his aspirations are confined to it only. His fond attachment to life makes him forget its ephemeral nature, and he goes on building innumerable baseless castles in the air and dreams of himself as the undisputed lord of all of them, sooner or later to be suddenly awakened to the grim fact that his career has almost come to an end! If education means expansion of mind by knowledge, can we call that education which, instead of expanding, narrows and confines the individual to this precarious and transient duration which goes

by the name of human life? The Vedas declare, 'that which is infinitely expanded on all sides, is alone blissful. Bliss cannot be found in narrow and limited things. The Infinite alone is Bliss. One should desire to comprehend the Infinite'. Our hoary sages of old knew what was true education, and thus educating themselves they came to know that, 'the Self alone is below, the Self above, the Self behind, the Self before; the Self is on the right, the Self is on the left, the Self alone is all this'. Can death frighten him who thus expands or educates himself? This is what is real education. If education, instead of broadening one's soul and gradually enabling it to embrace even the Infinite, narrows it in the not-very-pleasant hole of a momentary life, it is worse than ignorance, and the wise man who first uttered the sentiment, 'where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise', had perhaps, this kind of education, in his mind.

And is not our modern education something like this? You may say that our boys have nowadays become more broad-hearted, and liberal. They have almost demolished the narrowing walls of the caste system, and begun to mix more freely with their neighbours than their forefathers. Now a days, most of them do not observe that foolish restriction in food, and take all those nourishing viands which are sanctioned by the unerring decision of science. They do not like to confine themselves to their own country, thinking it to be all in all, like the frog in the well, but they want to go out to other lands to learn many new things, and thus gather more knowledge which their own country cannot supply them with. Did any ancient society or nation know what great power of doing

good to the world lay dormant in steam or electricity? Modern scientific education flying on her two wings of observation and experiment has soared to those regions which our forefathers could not even imagine, and discovered those grand truths which to them appeared as incredible as miracles. Considering all these glorious achievements, can we judiciously stigmatise our present system of education as narrow and worthless?

Yes, I do not deny that some good has been derived from our education, but I am not ready to give it more credit than what is really due to it. All those glorious achievements which I have just now pointed out, are almost nothing better than so many shining soap-bubbles which are very glorious to look at, but contain nothing inside. Our boys have certainly become more broad-hearted and liberal; they are very lax in observing the caste restrictions nowadays. But have they really become so much filled with the love for all beings, that they can equally feel for all, for a saint as well as for a sinner, for a beautiful as well as for an ugly man, for a friend as well as for an enemy? Have they realized the highest ideal which Bhagavan Sri Krishna holds out in his immortal Song, in describing the state of those men who have been able to demolish the narrowing walls of the caste system? Do they as the truly wise see a learned and humble Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a Pariah equally? Have they been able to garner in their bosoms that universal solvent of Divine Love, wherein good, bad, high, low, rich, poor, favourable, unfavourable, all become one? Has not education made them more vain, more irreverent towards their superiors, more fastidious, more critical in finding fault with others but more lenient, and indulgent regarding their own shortcomings, and as such more selfish than their uneducated brethren? And considering this, can we with any good

reason say that they have almost demolished the narrowing walls of the caste system? Have they not jumped from the frying pan into the fire, by giving up one kind of caste system and taking up another? Has the change made them better or worse? The born Brahmana does not hate the other castes so much as the reform-loving revolutionist hates those who are conservatively disposed. Is this love? I am not discussing here the merits or demerits of the caste system, as it now holds in India. What I want to show is that the so-called reform, brought about by our modern education has not mended matters in any way, but has perhaps spoiled them in many cases.

The next thing our education has done is that it has saved our young men from becoming frogs in the well by taking some of them to foreign countries to learn many new truths which they could not learn in India. Thanks to the British Government, whose broad and philanthropic line of action has spared no pains to bring in the light of Western science and philosophy to illumine this subject Empire, the liberal education received in our schools and colleges produces men who are not in any way inferior to any of those England-returned title-holders in point of up-to-date scientific and literary attainments. The former have got greater caution and better judgment in them than their more civilized brethren who are characterised by hasty and superficial methods of procedure. They want, as they say, to put new wine in old bottles by thrusting Western manners and customs into our Eastern modes of living. Almost all the noteworthy children of modern education, beginning from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, had at first completed their studentship here, and then had gone to the West to be recognised as learned scholars. In the face of such facts, it is useless to argue that we must go out of our Motherland in order to attain perfection.

The unbounded license in taking food of all descriptions from all sources—which is one of the legacies of our education—is not a thing to be much proud of. It is nobler to restrain one's passions and appetites, than giving them unrestrained liberty. Most of our educated men nowadays harbour a wrong notion that animal food can give us more physical and mental vigour than vegetable diet, entirely forgetful of the fact that though the Brahmanas are vegetarians from their birth, and have from time immemorial, never soiled their hands with the blood of living beings, are yet more intelligent and educated than their flesh-eating brethren, are fairer and more beautiful, are soberer and more considerate, in many cases. This is especially true of the Deccan which has given India three of her best religious teachers, Sri Sankara, Ramanuja, and Sri Madhva, all of whom were Brahmanas. Food, indeed, should be taken according to one's natural craving, caused by the climate in which one lives, as well as by one's mental aptitude, which may either be thoughtful, active, or dull. A thoughtful man naturally likes food which is plain, simple and easily digestible. An active man requires life-giving and exciting food to hold him up in his incessant struggles against unfavourable circumstances. It is only a lazy, dull, and worthless man, having no discriminative faculty that takes all sorts of food without any restriction, his idea being to swallow as much victuals as possible. It is tragic indeed that the number of such people is a legion. It is not at all good to take food from a man whom one knows to be immoral and wicked, because by so doing one will have to sympathise with him in gratefulness, which is as good as imbibing his perverse nature to some extent. So it is not at all good to be indiscriminate in taking one's food, as such a laxity greatly tends to bring down the man. We cannot be at all proud of our young men's consti-

tution, and therefore they should avoid it if they want to live long with health and vigour.

In the beginning of the formation of one's character restriction is absolutely necessary, as it acts like a hedge round a growing plant, says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. If a plant is not protected by a fence it is beset with all sorts of dangers, and is sure to fall a victim to a thousand and one of them. But when it grows up to be a tree, the fence may be removed without any injury to it. Similary when a man has his character firmly implanted in him, let him then go beyond caste and food restrictions and that will not injure him in any way. Previous to that, if he takes undue licence it will be as good as forcibly pulling out the slough from above a sore which has not been completely healed and thus making it worse. If a frog wants to be as big as a bull, in its attempt to do so it will burst itself to death. Similary if a man with unformed character wants to imitate a man with formed character, he will fare nothing better than the frog.

Now let us consider the nature of our education which, nowadays, principally rests upon the study of science whose sweet harmony and precise character have been lately discovered by our modern *savants* and whose youthful beauty coupled with her various marvellous achievements has an irresistible charm over the whole humanity. Our Poetry, Drama, History, Philosophy, nay the whole range of literature, have been permeated with her light. Even Religion herself fearing that her antique beauty may not be a match to the youthful charms of this newly-found maid, is fast changing her garb to gain more customers to her fold. How this young governess of the old Lady has tortured and twisted many of her antiquated notions, is not unknown to most of us. So science, nowadays, is all-paramount, and in judging her beauty I am virtually judging the whole modern

age which has got all its charms from her.

Observation and experiment are the two principal methods with which science starts confidently, being fully convinced beforehand about the uniformity of natural laws. Reasoning is the source of these two methods, which in its turn, is based upon the duality of the knower and the known, the subject and the object, the Purusha and the Prakriti. If it is a fact that the subject can live independent of the object, it is also a fact that the object can live as well, independent of the subject. This subject which lives independent of the object goes by the name of Purusha or Mind-in-itself, and the object which lives independent of the subject goes by the name of Prakriti or Matter-in-itself. Let us try to have some sort of conception of these two independent entities. Mind-in-itself being free from all material taints must be beyond thinking and feeling, based upon desire or will, and hence must be unknown and unknowable in itself, having the power to know when it comes in contact with the object. Matter-in-itself not being known to the subject is also unknown and unknowable in itself, having the power to be known by the subject. When each is left perfectly free to itself, the subject, being void of all desires and all activities, is regarded as perfect, since desire means want, which means imperfection.

Now, because every one wants to be perfect, it follows that the final separation of the Subject from the Object constitutes the highest goal of men and gods alike. This is what is called Liberation or *mukti*, realizing which, the man is not conditioned by or confined to any desire, and thus unconfined he becomes Infinite, or realizes his infinite nature. Being beyond all activities he realizes his eternally changeless nature, and free from all restlessness, worries and anxieties, he realizes his all-blissful state. This eternally all-blissful and conscious

nature of man goes by the name of *Sachchidanandam*. This is indeed the only ideal of every man; this is the only goal towards which all beings are struggling, for does not every one love to live eternally? What can be more hateful to him than the idea of death? Does he not want to be always happy? Is not misery a thing which he hates most? Is there not in him an incessant hankering after knowledge? And can that hankering in him ever cease as long as there remains something more for him to be known? His hunger after knowledge has no limit, and it will never be satiated until he knows all. Then alone his restlessness will end. Now, as long as a man is restless he is not in his proper element, reaching which alone he finds absolute rest. Hence man's real element or nature is omniscience, for nothing short of that will ever give him rest. Thus we have found out true human nature, which is eternal, all-blissful, and omniscient. Can man ever expect to realize this as long as he remains connected with this universe? The Knower of Purusha must entirely separate himself from the Known or Prakriti before he is able to realize his infinite nature, as we have just now seen. The goal lies in this final separation, which means the destruction of this idea of a universe of *sense*. For, what is this universe? It is the offspring of the union of Purusha with Prakriti, of the Knower with the Known, of the Subject with the Object. It is altogether a dependent thing. It is made up of forms, touches, tastes, smells, and sounds, and thus it is based upon a conscious, living organism and consequently is as evanescent, and shifting as the latter. It is a series of ever-changing appearances which mirage-like always eludes the grasp of the most acute of observers and that is why it is known as phenomenon, as opposed to noumenon or the permanent background upon which it mani-

fests itself like the shadowy pictures of the magic lantern. Thus it is nothing better than a passing shadow, and should always be regarded as such. This is the conclusion which we at last arrive at after properly analysing the universe. Could he be regarded as a wise man who makes much of this shadow?

But the subject matter of science is this Universe, which she regards as the only reality. Science does not want to admit the existence of any thing which is not to be found in the universe. She teaches us to worship it and it alone, to make it the only subject of our study, setting aside all such transcendental ideas as that of God, Purusha, Prakriti, etc. She wants to convince us that this earth is all in all. Hence she is ever vigilant to beautify and adorn it and make it so charming, attractive and homelike that men may not have any inclination to search for any other home anywhere. She holds that knowledge is power, knowledge gathered from observation and experiment.

After what we have already considered, does the claim of science appear in any way to be valid and well-grounded? Does she not make much of a shadow? Is she not like a siren that entices the passers-by with her sweet voice, and false promises only to kill them? 'Bliss is not to be found in small things' sings the hoary sage, while science insists us to believe that all bliss can be derived from a shadow. Whom are we to accept, science or the sage who promises eternal life, all-blissfulness, and omniscience? Knowledge is power indeed, but not the knowledge of shadow, but of reality. Moreover, we can never expect to get perfect knowledge of the universe as it is infinite in its bulk and eternal in its duration, whereas, confined in body and mind, we are nothing better than limited individuals. Even if we get the power of knowing all about a world every second of our life, the time will never come when we shall be able to know all the works in the uni-

verse for they are innumerable and hence inexhaustible. So our knowledge of the universe must always remain partial or incomplete, and such knowledge is worse than no knowledge of it. It is as good as the blind men's knowledge of the elephant, in the fable. Can such a knowledge be ever desirable?

We have now fairly dwelt upon the false claim of science upon our attention, and found out that she has no power to give us what we really desire, but on the contrary she has a great tendency to waylay and kill us by puffing us up with false vanity caused by a few little, ephemeral advantages of the flesh got through her. So we should not be proud of the education which we derive from science. But unfortunately, she has permeated every branch of learning, nay, even religion, as we have seen. Can the young votary of such an education achieve anything truly noble and grand which will give him some real advantages in life? It is too much to expect any such thing from him. Hence the system of education now in vogue in our schools and colleges is certainly very defective.

Self-expansion should be the end and aim of true education, and that can only come when it enables us to disentangle ourselves completely from the meshes of the body. Can it be effected by committing suicide? By no means. It increases the bondage a thousandfold, being an outcome of weakness; for only those people commit suicide who have not strength and courage enough in them to face boldly all untoward circumstances. Weakness strengthens the bondage, while strength alone breaks it. What is it that binds, limits, and weakens? Desire and not the body which is rooted in it. If you chop the branch of a tree, many more branches will grow in its place, as long as the root is left unmolested; in the same manner, if you kill one body, many more bodies will come in its place, as long as the desire is there. So self-

expansion requires the uprooting of desires. How can it be effected? Wherein are the desires themselves rooted? They have their birth-place in the senses. Hence controlling the senses alone we can control desires, and controlling the latter again we can get rid of them, and thus expand ourselves in all ways, so that the whole universe may form a part of us, instead of being mere insignificant particles of it. Can we get rid of the senses by mutilating them? No, for we can only mutilate the external organs which are merely the seats of them, the senses being always beyond the reach of material weapons. We must have a strong yearning to control our desires for seeing, touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, thinking, feeling, and willing. As a thorn is required to extricate the thorn that gets into the body and causes trouble to it, so an intense desire for God is necessary to extricate all those desires of the flesh that have rooted themselves in man, says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and when thus one desire extricates other desires, he should throw away both of them, like the thorns.

Now, this is not a very easy affair. It requires a life-long struggle on the part of the man to bring the senses under his control. A sensible man should not allow himself to be controlled by his senses, for, like unbridled horses they will drag him to destruction. But when he is able to bring them under his control, then like bridled horses they will lead him to his destination and instead of being his enemies will be his true friends. This attempt to control the senses is what morality aims at. Hence the moral path is the only path every man should follow, so that he may reach perfection at last. Man indeed is the creator of his own destiny. 'The Self is its own friend and foe, says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. 'He who conquers his self by means of his Self is a friend to his self'. Indeed man lives in his self-created world. It is foolishness to imagine that the

world is outside and independent of him.

If one wants to see a pious and godly world, one should have to be pious and godly himself.

Religion is self-culture, and self-culture is true education. Hence genuine education is indissolubly connected with religion. By expanding myself, I expand the universe in which I live. Thus doing good to the world means doing good to one's own self. Our boys are sadly wanting in this kind of education. They are perfectly satisfied with the shadow, and do not care to see that of which it is the shadow. A bare mention of wine cannot inebriate a man; wine must be drunk if he wants to be intoxicated. So merely jumping at the shadow can never give one shelter and protection, can never take one beyond all miseries. The reality which is behind the shadow of the phenomenal universe must be realised before a man can be expected to fulfil his three eternal cravings mentioned before. That reality goes by the name of Purusha, Brahman, or God. As he who wants to see the potter cannot be satisfied by merely looking at the pot, but must have to turn his back to it and search after the potter, so he who wants to realize God must not remain satisfied by studying the universe only but must have to turn his back to it. And how to do that? By means of education. The study of the universe is necessary so long as it does not point out to the student the real Being behind it who is the abode of all bliss, all knowledge, and all life. That education whose end and aim is to lead the student to truth, saving him from the enticing effects of all false glamours, is true education. Instead of being a curse it is a blessing to humanity. When science leaving her false coquetry plainly confesses her utter inability to solve this infinite riddle of the universe and asks her votaries to search truth somewhere beyond her own jurisdiction as she occasionally does to some fortunate individual, then she behaves like a

goddess, and as such, fairly claims our love and reverence for her. To this divine aspect of hers every man should bow down.

Much has already been said about the absolute necessity of rejecting the phenomena to realize the One Truth behind, which is differently known as Purusha, Brahman or God, although there are some apparent contradictions in the understanding of these terms. But this is more easily said than done, nay, it is the most difficult of all the feats which a human being has to perform before he can hope to realize that much-longed-for eternal peace and bliss for which he is struggling consciously or unconsciously. The senses are naturally refractory, much more, the mind. As there is no royal road to success, how very trifling that may be, we must continually struggle hard with intense patience and perseverance to realize this highest of all goals. Culture of the following virtues which Bhagavan Sri Krishna mentions to Arjuna as the only means to realize that Being who alone is worthy of being known, is absolutely necessary for this purpose. 'Sacrifice of pride and vanity, non-injury, forbearance, simplicity, reverential service to the teacher, purity, patience,

austerity, non-attachment to sensual appetites, non-egoism, meditation on the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease, absence of undue love and attachment towards one's own child, wife, home, etc., constant mental equipoise in weal or woe, exclusive and intense devotion toward God, love of solitude, non-attraction for the company of men, constant study of the nature of self, a clear conception of the meanings of spiritual truths,—these are the means of realizing the Highest Ideal, and those that are contrary to these blind the man and hence are known as ignorance.' The culture of these virtues alone is calculated to make us perfect. In ancient India education was indissolubly connected with such a culture, and that is why those old students still stand as the undisputed Teachers of mankind and are called by the holy appellation of Rishis or sages. The downfall of modern India is due to this want of virtuous and austere practices along with the book-learned education. If our educationists awake to this decadent factor in modern education and try to remedy it, then there is some hope of regaining the pristine glory and grandeur for which ancient India is deservedly famous throughout the world.

SULABHA AND JANAKA

By Brahmachari Balakrishna.

In days of yore, there reigned in Mithila the King Dharmadhvaja¹ of Janaka's race. As a profound scholar of the Vedas and other scriptures and as one who intensely practised the truths contained therein his name in

the land was without a parallel. It was said that the sceptre in his hand was the symbol not of sovereignty, but of Sannyasa. And his example of a Rajarshi, of one in whom the ideal sage and the ruler *par excellence* met eli-

¹ He is more popularly known as Janaka, and hence he will be referred to here as such.

cited widespread admiration in his own country and outside. In the same Satya Yuga a *yogini* by name Sulabha, was practising yoga and wandering over the earth. Having heard of Janaka as a Jivanmukta she wanted to ascertain the truth of the reports about him and was desirous of having a personal interview. So abandoning her usual appearance by her yogic powers, she assumed a form of faultless features and matchless beauty and presented herself before the king while in council. Janaka, beholding her celestial form, was filled with wonder. He received Sulabha in all cordiality and assigning her a prominent seat, satisfied her with excellent refreshments. After the rites of hospitality, Sulabha, on being asked, disclosed the purpose of her coming and urged the king to declare himself in respect of his claims as a Jivanmukta. Desirous of getting a first-hand knowledge of his worth, Sulabha by the aid of her yogic powers entered the *sukshma sarira* of the king in her subtle form and bound him by the yoga bonds. The king who prided himself in his achievements was rather taken aback, and was a little incensed too, at the audacity of the lady. And he addressed her thus:

Janaka: O holy lady, to what mode of life are you devoted? To which race do you belong? What are you and whence are you coming? I wish to know you well before I speak to you on *moksha*. Listen to me with all attention for there is none else in this world that can discourse on the topic of liberation. I am the beloved disciple of the illustrious and venerable sage Panchasikha of Parasara's race. He did not, however, command me to give up my kingdom. I learned at his feet that renunciation is the highest means prescribed for *moksha*. Out of knowledge comes renunciation and through knowledge of self one attains the highest. Hence freed from attachments, and fixing my mind on the supreme Brahman, I live, practising in its entirety the conduct enjoined in the treatises on *moksha*. Having attained my true goal, i.e., emancipation, I am happy and I look upon a clod of earth, a piece of stone and a lump of gold equally. If *grihastas* possess *yama* and *niyama*, as I do, they become the equals of Sannyasins. But if, on the other hand, Sannyasins cling to desire and aversion, to spouses and honour, they are in no way better than *grihastas*. As it is knowledge that brings liberation, the sceptre and

other royal insignia can be no bar to liberation; for, as is in my case, these externals do not deprive me of my knowledge. I may be a king and you may be a mendicant. Neither your mendicancy nor my royalty can aid or obstruct our emancipation. They are only modes of life. At the same time I must tell you that the wearing of ochre clothes, shaving of the head, and carrying of the *kamandalu* are only external signs of a mode of life. They cannot, by themselves, bring about one's emancipation. One attains liberation through knowledge alone. So, though I am ostensibly engaged in the enjoyment of wealth, pleasure and royalty which I get by my status as ruler, I have cut off the bonds of attachment with the sword of renunciation whetted on the stone of the scriptures which treat of *moksha*. O holy lady, I cherish an affection for you. But that should not prevent me from telling you that your behaviour ill becomes the mode of life you profess to have embraced. You have great delicacy of form and features and you are young of age. You have all these and you have *niyama*. This I doubt verily. Having taken control of my *antahkarana*, you have entered into me in your subtle form for ascer-

taining whether I am really liberated or not. This act of yours is highly damaging to the dignity of that life the emblems of which you bear. For a *yogini* who is impelled by desire, the sacred ochre robe is unfit. Listen now to the serious breaches of *dharma* involved in your unwarranted contact with me. You belong to the foremost of orders, being as you are a Brahmana woman. As regards myself, I am a Kshatriya. The scriptures never warrant a union between these two orders. You live in the practice of those duties enjoined by the *sannyasasrama* whereas I live as a *grihasta*. This act of yours is therefore productive of another evil, as it involves an unnatural union of two opposing modes of life. Again, if you are of my own *gotra*, you have, by entering into my person, been guilty of another evil—the evil of unwarrantable union. If again, your husband is alive, you are guilty of a fourth breach of *dharma*, for you are not one with whom I may be lawfully united. And worst of all, you have perpetrated these sinful acts, impelled by the desire of testing me. Nay, to display your superiority in the presence of my counsellors and Brahmans, you have, through your yogic powers, entered my person

against my wish and thus asserted your victory. Such self-assertiveness ill becomes a woman. Women wield a subtle charm and high power in virtue of their beauty, guilelessness, and blessedness. But your conduct has revealed an utter bankruptcy of these womanly virtues. Anyhow, it behoves you to apprise me of your credentials, as also the object of your coming here.

Sulabha though addressed in such improper and indecent language by Janaka was unabashed and composed. She then spoke to Janaka thus :

Sulabha : You have been claiming to be a Jivanmukta, to be one who sees the oneness everywhere, and in the same breath you are asking me what I am and whence I am coming. If it is true that you have transcended all sense of duality, how is it that you see me as different from yourself? You were talking glibly of the highest knowledge and of the scriptures. The scriptures speak of the constituent elements of the body being in a state of incessant flux, like the flame of the burning lamp. When the bodies of creatures are thus in a state of incessant change, who then can speak about the time and place of origin of creatures? What connec-

tion is there between creatures and their bodies? I have no real connection with my body and then how can you allege that I have any contact with the bodies of others and that I have entered your body and have brought about *Varna-samkara* (intermixture of castes)? I doubt whether you have heard the teachings of Panchasikha in their entirety. If you have heard, you have heard it without advantage. For, how can a Jivanmukta—as you claim yourself to be—identify himself, as you do, with a particular caste or mode of life and consider himself defiled when one of another order or caste enters his *sukshma sarira*. What indications of *moksha* occur in you who claim to belong to the Kshatriya order or *garhastya* mode of life? You talk like a man with worldly knowledge only and your claims as a liberated one are preposterous. Unworthy as you are of your claims, your pretence must be put down by your councillors. This endeavour of yours to attain emancipation is like the use of medicine by a patient who indulges in all kinds of forbidden food and practices. With *yatis* the custom is to dwell in uninhabited or deserted abodes. And so I think I have acted correctly

by entering your mind which is truly empty of real knowledge.

O sinless one ! you come of a high race ; you have modesty and foresight. Whether the act has been good or bad, my entrance into your body has been a private one, a matter between ourselves. Was it proper for you who claim acquaintance with the rules of propriety of speech, to proclaim this private fact before this assembly ? O king of Mithila, I am staying in you without touching you, even as the lotus-leaf stays undrenched in water. With the dawn of true knowledge, the scriptures declare, all senses retire for ever from the sense objects. But that you feel my touch is proof positive that you have yet to attain that knowledge. It is plain that you are an aberration from the *garhastya* life and equally plain that you have not yet achieved liberation, so difficult of attainment. You have got stranded between the two and pretend to have attained *moksha*. The contact of one *mukta* with another cannot lead to an intermixture of castes or breach of *dharma* as you dread. Only those that regard the soul to be identical with the body, and those that think the several orders and modes of life to be really different from

one another, think in terms of *varnasamkara*. My body is different from yours ; but my soul is not different from yours. To realise this is to banish all doubts as to a real contact with ourselves.

By way of conclusion and in answer to your queries about me, I say that I come of the same order as yourself. I belong to the race to which the royal sage Pradhana belongs and my name is Sulabha. While quite young I renounced married life and being instructed in the paths of *moksha*, I wander over the earth alone as an ascetic. O king, having heard of you as a Jivanmukta, I came here, not with the idea of testing your worth, as you allege, but desirous of learning from you and benefiting thereby. Sincerity compels me to say that I am sorely disappointed. As one of the mendicant order resides only for one night in an empty house which he quits the next morning, so I shall reside for this night in your person, which as I have already said is like an empty chamber destitute of true knowledge and leave tomorrow. You have honoured me with speech and other offers that are due from a host to a guest for which I am thankful.

[Note. The possibility of Jivanmukti and attending to one's social

and domestic duties alongside with such a state of life is debated in the ancient texts. While commenting on Gita III. 20 Sankara states that *if Janaka had true knowledge he was forced by prarabdha to continue in the kingly station of life; if he had not Brahmajnana he was doing the duty for getting purity of mind which led to liberation.* While commenting on *Frashopanisad* I. 16 he asserts that some measure of crookedness, falsehood and deception is inevitable for a householder,

while Brahmajnana requires absolute moral purity which only a super-social ascetic can have. The above story narrated in the *Mahabharata*, Santi Parva, supports this view. The contrary view is however held by some others; for instance *vide Yajnavalkya Smriti* III. 105. 'Even a *grahasta* is liberated if he is earning wealth by just methods, is interested in giving hospitality, is established in knowledge of truth, is enthusiastic about worship of gods and ancestors and is truthful.'

THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE IN ANCIENT AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

By Prof. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M. A.

The fact of change has always been a problem to philosophers in presenting a constructive theory of reality, right from the days of the Eleatic Greeks down to our own times. While 'change' is undeniable, 'stability' is no less a fact of experience. The proper reconciliation of Being and Becoming has been a crucial problem in every system of philosophy. Usually, a philosopher has either treated the one as fundamental and original and the other as derivative and secondary or *vice versa*. Philosophies taking extreme view-points, have also gone to the length of the complete denial of the one or the other.

Heraclitus was the earliest Greek philosopher who took cognizance of the fact of change and declared that reality was all change, an ever-progressing motion. Not only the individual things in the world were changing but the world in its entirety was a ceaseless and a perpetual motion. All flows, nothing abides. 'All is moving, nothing is fixity. We cannot cross the same stream twice.' Permanence is not to be found in the world. If there

is anything which may be said to be ever-lasting and deserves the name of a deity, it is not a thing, matter or substance, but motion, the cosmic movement, the Becoming itself.

Let us go a little into detail and see how Heraclitus came to formulate his doctrine of the universal flux. This doctrine advocated by him is closely related to, and is an inevitable corollary from, his basic conception of the world as 'ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out.' Heraclitus was in search of a new primary substance which would solve the problem of the One and the Many without treating the latter as a breach in the unity of the One and harmonise the 'strife of opposites' which Anaximander had given out as a fundamental 'injustice.' This he found in Fire. The reason of this and its relation to the theory of flux is thus explained by Burnet: 'The quantity of fire in a flame burning steadily appears to remain the same, the flame seems to be what we call a "thing". And yet the substance of it is continually changing. It is always passing

away in smoke, and its place is always being taken by fresh matter from the fuel that feeds it. This is just what we want. If we regard the world as an "ever-living Fire", we can understand how it is always becoming all things, while all things are always returning to it. This necessarily brings with it a certain way of looking at the change and movement of the world. Fire burns continually and without interruption. It is always consuming fuel and liberating smoke. Everything is either mounting upwards to serve as fuel, or sinking downwards after having nourished the flame. It follows that the whole of reality is like an ever-flowing stream, and that nothing is ever at rest for a moment. The substance of the things we see is in constant change. Even as we look at them, some of the stuff of which they are composed has already passed into something else, while fresh stuff has come into them from another source.' (*Early Greek Philosophy*: Pp. 145-46).

We may note here a point raised by Sri Aurobindo in his thoughtful little book *Heraclitus* which has just been published. Sri Aurobindo contends that the philosophy of Heraclitus is not through and through a philosophy of Becoming but affirms Being as well. To take the former view 'is to read a little too much into Heraclitus' theory of perpetual change, to take it too much by itself.' Sri Aurobindo holds that Heraclitus' 'ever-living Fire', which is not merely an abstract will-to-become as in the philosophy of Nietzsche but 'a substance or at least a substantial forge', is the fundamental Being. The Fire, he tells us, being 'something out of which all cosmic becoming arises and into which it returns, what is this but eternal Being'? No doubt, Heraclitus postulates a primary substance, Fire, which is the one stuff of all things, the unitary principle in the Many; yet, we would venture to suggest, it is not Being properly so-called. It is not

different and distinct from the order of Becoming but the Becoming itself. It is not a Being above the accident of change. Such a principle can more appropriately be called 'eternal Becoming.' Eternity and Being (as contradistinguished from Becoming) are not convertible terms. There is no self-contradiction in conceiving an eternal principle which eternally *becomes*. The eternal but mutable Prakriti of Samkhya is an instance in point. Heraclitus' 'ever-living Fire' is, in this respect only, an analogous conception. We see no reason to disagree with Plato and Aristotle when they sum up the teachings of Heraclitus in the words: 'All things flow'. 'Heraclitus' Sri Aurobindo tells us 'was greatly preoccupied with his idea of eternal becoming, for him the one right account of the cosmos, but his cosmos has still an eternal basis, a unique original principle. The idea of the universe as constant motion and unceasing change was always before him, and yet behind and in it all he saw too a constant principle of determination and even a mysterious principle of identity. Every day, he says, it is a new sun that rises; yes, but if the sun is always new, exists only by change from moment to moment, like all things in Nature, still it is the same ever-living Fire that rises with each Dawn in the shape of the sun'. Yes, Fire is the eternal and unifying principle of Heraclitus' cosmos, but it is the *process* itself, the *perpetual becoming*, and not any stable *basis* thereof. The only thing that could lend plausibility to the view that Heraclitus posited a central Being as the basis and support of the ever-becoming cosmic process, is, his concept of Zeus which is taken to be a synonym for God. But Heraclitus' concept of Zeus is far from clear, and far from bearing a properly theistic interpretation. He is willing to give the name Zeus to Wisdom (of seeing unity in the plurality of things). Zeus then becomes what we may call in modern terminology Law,

analogous to the *rtam* of the Vedic Rishis.

The world of change, according to Heraclitus, is not a haphazard and chaotic process, like the wild movements of an agitated ocean, but a world of ordered change. There is a constant regularity in the succession of events and change is always in accordance with definite laws. Though the world is one of constant mutations, the presence of order in it is an undeniable reality. This order, which alone is permanent in the world, was called by Heraclitus, the destiny or the reason of the world.

Of this order, there are two essential characteristics; the harmony of opposites, and the completion in a circuit of matter in its successive stages of change in the universe. Changing into 'other' was interpreted by Heraclitus to mean change into its opposite. Things are continually changing into their opposites. This, 'strife', says Heraclitus, is the father of all things and the King of all things. From fire things are continually changing, by condensation into water, air, etc., and these things again, by rarefaction, were resolving back to fire. Thus change and counter-change are present everywhere side by side. When change and counter-change are held in equilibrium, when there is as much change as counter-change, we have the semblance of permanence. Such was Heraclitus' view of change.

From Heraclitus we may now turn our attention to Buddhism which has a similar philosophy of change. Buddhism also regards the world-process as a continuous flux. Things are not stable realities but transient phases of a ceaseless flux. Existence is not persistence in one identical condition, but an unremitting process of transformation, a continual flow from one mode of existence to another, a concatenation of changes. Being is a pure abstraction of thought. All that exists is becoming. There is nothing permanent, no permanent soul,

no permanent substratum of the universe. The continuity of the flux of the world in the absence of a permanent substratum is explained by the doctrine of dependent origination or *pratitya-samutpada* according to which, one mode of existence transmits its causal energy to another, and so on.

Like Heraclitus too, Buddhism does not regard the flux of the world as without order, but acknowledges the presence of *Niyama* or order in it.

Thus, according to Buddhism, change is the fundamental reality of things. The stability of things is only a mistaken notion for the rapidity of continuous succession, even as we mistake a glowing stick whirled round and round for a circle of fire.

Let us now come to Bergson, the modern philosopher of change. The whole philosophy of Bergson is based on the fundamental reality of change. Change is real; Reality is essentially dynamic, thought makes it static. Intuition presents to us life and consciousness as a flow, and not as something static. We cannot derive movement from things, but things are derived from movements. In the words of Bergson: 'Movement is the reality itself, and what we call rest is a certain state of things identical with or analogous to that which is produced when two trains are moving with the same velocity in the same direction on parallel rails; each train appears to be stationary to the travellers seated in the other'. And again 'there are changes but there are not things that change: change does not need a support. There are movements but not necessarily constant objects which are moved; movement does not imply something that is movable'. Thus, 'every stable state is the result of co-existence between change and the change of the person who perceives it'. There is no immobility anywhere. 'There are not states and things, but merely actions'. Science lends support to such a

conclusion. The electrical theory of matter teaches that an atom is a miniature solar system consisting of a central mass or core of 'protons' which are charged with positive electricity, with 'electrons' moving round, charged with negative electricity. The ultimate truth of an atom is not that something is electrified but electricity itself, which is a form of energy. What we call stable matter is thus at bottom a form of movement. What, then, are things? To this the answer of Bergson is that reality which is an ever-changing continuous act is presented to us in the form of things on account of the 'selecting' nature of perception, memory and consciousness. In perception only the action in progress is illumined by consciousness and what is irrelevant to it is ruled out. We perceive not to know but to act. Perception is the illumination by consciousness of present action. It is a selection from reality which is an unceasing movement. It is this selection which gives to movement the form of a thing.

The case of memory is also similar. The whole of our past experience is always present in our mind as pure memory, a record. Of this we are conscious, at any moment, of as much only as is relevant to our present activity and the rest lies, in unconsciousness, and can be brought to consciousness when necessary. 'The recollections of which we are at any moment conscious are therefore not new existences, but selections from what already exists in its own right, selections that come into the span, the zone of activity, which consciousness is illuminating.' (H. Wildon Carr). 'Consciousness acts as a tension, an apprehension, a holding together round the centre of activity, of the influences which as perceptions and memories, direct and control the action.' (H. Wildon Carr).

This is how Bergson arrives at the dynamic concept of reality, the concept of ceaseless Becoming without any basic Being.

In all the above views we have considered, reality is conceived as an unceasing movement, and stability only a derivative concept. In direct contrast to these there have been philosophies which conceived reality as eternal and unchangeable, and the world of movement and change, the world in time and space, as but an appearance. To the Eleatic monists of Greece, Being which is the sole reality is unitary and unchangeable, and change or movement merely deception. Parmenides of Elea, one of the greatest thinkers of pre-Socratic times held the view that the One alone exists, and that One is eternal, immutable, immovable and indivisible, as Burnet puts it 'a finite, spherical, motionless corporeal *plenum*'.

The philosophy of Parmenides may thus be summarised: Thought is the faculty whereby we determine what reality is. Parmenides was the first Greek philosopher to switch off from the railroad of cosmological speculations to the deliverances of thought or to what we call ontological problems. Now if we closely follow the deliverances of thought, it is clear at the very outset, said Parmenides, that thought can only pertain to something which *is* or *exists* and not to something which *is not* or to *non-existence* or *nothing*. 'Nothing' or 'emptiness' is simply unthinkable. Consequently, 'it is' is the initial affirmation in the philosophy of Parmenides. Now, from the unthinkable of *is not* or *nothing* it follows that entire reality is a *plenum*, there being nothing like an empty space either inside it or outside it. It cannot therefore move, for, if it moved, it would move into empty space and there is no empty space. It is immovable. What is, *is*; and cannot become more or less. It has as much of it in one place as in other. It is complete in itself and has no need to stretch out itself indefinitely into empty space. Being a self-complete, continuous and indivisible *plenum*, real in every direction, it can only be conceived

aspherical. Any other conception would make it more real in one direction than in another. Such is Reality. The appearances of multiplicity and motion, empty space and time are only illusions.

After Parmenides, Zeno made another vigorous attempt to show the impossibility of motion. In his well-known paradoxes, Zeno tried to show the *reductio ad absurdum* of accepting the reality of motion. If motion be real, said Zeno, if a thing really moves from one point to another, it must first move through half the distance; but before it can do this, it must move through the half of this half; and so on *ad infinitum*. This means that it will have to pass through an infinite number of points, but this is impossible in a finite time. A similar difficulty he points out in the paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. Achilles, he says, can never overtake the tortoise, because, as he is reaching what at any moment is the tortoise's starting point the latter will have gained a certain amount of time; and as Achilles must always first reach the position previously occupied by his competitor, the tortoise will ever remain a little ahead of him. Thus Achilles shall never be able to overtake the tortoise. Similarly, the flying arrow is at rest. In order that an arrow flying through space should reach its destination, it must successively occupy a series of positions. Now, at any moment we may choose the flying arrow is in a particular place and therefore at rest, since an object is at rest when it occupies a space equal to itself. And as no summing up of states of rest can result in motion, the arrow does not really move. By these puzzling paradoxes Zeno wanted to prove the impossibility of motion.

Coming to modern times, we find F. H. Bradley declaring that motion and change are only appearances for their concepts are self-contradictory. 'Motion' says Bradley 'implies that what is moved is in two places in one time; and this seems

not possible'. The concept of change also is not without insuperable difficulties: 'Something, A, changes, and therefore it cannot be permanent. On the other hand, if A is not permanent, what is it that changes? It will no longer be A, but something else. In other words, let A be free from change in time, and it does not change. But let it contain change, and at once it becomes A₁, A₂, A₃. Then what becomes of A, and of its change, for we are left with something else? Again we may put the problem thus. The diverse states of A must exist within one time; and yet they cannot, because they are successive. Let us first take A as timeless, in the sense of out of time. Here the succession of the change must belong to it, or not. In the former case, what is the relation between the succession and A? If there is none, A does not change. If there is any, it forces unintelligibly a diversity into A, which is foreign to its nature and incomprehensible. And then this diversity, by itself, will be merely the unsolved problem. If we are to remove change altogether, then we have, standing unintelligible relation with the timeless A, a temporal change which offers us all our old difficulties unreduced'.

In the system of the Advaita Vedanta, as is well known, the world of change and multiplicity is not accorded the same reality as Brahman or the Absolute. Brahman is the ultimate Being and is the ground of the world of Becoming.

Thus have philosophies been divided into two opposite camps; one declaring change to be the fundamental reality and permanence illusory, and the other taking just the opposite view. But either view stops at a half-way house and does not come to any satisfactory solution of the problem of the relation of Being to Becoming.

Reality is neither all static nor all change. To say that there is

¹ *Appearance and Reality* (ninth impr.): Pp. 38-39.

nothing unchangeable in reality is to deny the very condition *sine qua non* of our experience of change. The continuous series of changes in our experience presupposes an Experiencer or Subject which as the witness of all changes must itself remain unchanging. If the Subject itself were to change, it would presuppose another subject to witness its changes, and this another: and so on—a *regressus ad infinitum*. The ultimate Subject of experience must therefore be unchanging. This ultimate Subject must be CONSCIOUSNESS; for all that exists, exists only as the object of consciousness.

Consciousness, therefore, in its ultimate state is changeless or static. It is the witness of all change, the unchanging substratum of all changing experience. By this changeless consciousness, of course, we do not mean the empirical 'states of consciousness' or 'mental states' which are passing and transitory, but the transcendental principle of consciousness which illuminates them all. When Bergson says that we intuit consciousness as a *flow*, we must understand him to mean only the empirical states of consciousness, the procession of psychological presentations, and not the transcendental or root consciousness—the *kootatha chaitanya* as Vedanta conceives it.

The changing and the changeless are, then, equally facts of experience; and a philosophy that totally abjures the one or the other only evades the problem of their reconciliation. Reality is neither 'being' solely nor 'becoming' solely; but, a nexus of two principles, the Unchanging Consciousness-Being and the Changing Becoming World-order of mind and matter. From a true and comprehensive standpoint we have to admit both. Sri Aurobindo thus points to the necessity of both: 'The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us

hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and the multitudinous. World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the jot of the dancing.'¹

Thus we see that 'being' and 'becoming' both have to be admitted as facts in reality. But now comes the most crucial of all questions in philosophy: What is the *relation* of the fundamental or foundational BEING to the order of BECOMING? Would it be a *rational* solution of the problem to say that BEING itself *becomes* or shall we say with the Samkhya philosophers that the unchanging being is a different and distinct principle from that which becomes? A truly rational and philosophical solution must come from a critical and searching scrutiny of the characters of 'being' and 'becoming' as they are revealed to us in our own concrete experience. Philosophical formulations can only take their stand on the deliverances of EXPERIENCE and in the solution of such a crucial philosophical problem as the relation of 'being' to 'becoming' we can hope to do nothing else.

¹ *The Life Divine*, Vol. I, P. 119.

Now, let us scrutinise experience as closely as we can and determine therein the nature of that which IS and that which BECOMES. What is it in experience which can be appraised as 'true being' or that which persists unchangeably, that which in its very nature is *not subject to change*. Being is, *ex hypothesi* non-becoming and immutably self-same. When we search for such a principle in experience we do not find it in the whole sphere of the objective or the not-self. It can only be found in the sphere of the 'self' or the 'subject'. All that is changeable, all that becomes, the entire region of the becoming, falls on the objective side of experience. Objectivity and becomingness go together. The very experience of a *becoming* or a *process* implies as its inexpugnable presupposition a subject-consciousness which itself does not become or which itself is not a part of the process. Such an unchanging consciousness is not merely a logical postulate of experience but the most indubitable Verity therein. We grasp it veridically in our knowledge or awareness of the 'self'. Our patent experience of self-awareness, when closely and carefully scrutinised, will be found to be an awareness of the self as an unchangeably self-same conscious principle. I am conscious of *myself as being ever the same*. The deepest deliverance of my awareness of self is: 'I am the same I that I ever was' and an invincible conviction that 'I will be the same I that I ever was so long as I exist at all'. Along with the apprehension of the self-sameness of the self we also apprehend it as a subject or a 'percipere', which stands self-distinguished from all that is perceived or objective in character. We are, then, brought to a conclusion which may be put in the form of two fundamental equations: Being=the Subject'; Becoming=all that is objective, the entire

region of the objective. The problem of the relation between Being and Becoming resolves itself into the problem of the relation between the Subject and the Objective. Now, Being as the ultimate Subject of experience or the foundational Consciousness and the order of Becoming as the Objective exhibit such radically distinct and contrary characters that to understand the one in terms of the other is utterly impossible and futile. The very first question that can be asked concerning their relatedness is: Is the Subject related at all to the Objective? The answer is both 'Yes' and 'No'. It cannot be out of relation to the Objective, for in that case the Objective could never be known. The Subject may also be said to be 'unrelated' to the Objective in so far as it is the 'relating' principle in all relations and connexions that are known in the Objective; the Subject is the presupposition of our knowledge of the relational cosmos which it could not be if it itself were a 'relatum' therein. The relatedness of the Subject to the Objective cannot be understood after the manner of any inter-objective relation. The subject *qua* the ultimate knowing principle can only be understood as a 'free' principle. The nature of the knowing function indicates the freedom of the knowing subject from the known object; for knowing consists, as Prof. K.C. Bhattacharya points out, of a 'free reference of the subject to the object'. 'The knowing function', he says, 'represents a positive mode of this freedom: the freedom of the subject to relate to the object without getting related to it, which is believed to be more certain than the object but is not known. We are aware of knowing a content when it is formulated and believed to be independent of our formulating, speaking or distinguishing act.'⁴ In self-distin-

⁴ By the 'Subject' is meant here not the 'ego', or 'a finite centre of consciousness' but the ultimate

BEING - CONSCIOUSNESS, the Atman which is also Brahman according to the Vedantic analysis.

⁴ The Subject as Freedom: P. 23.

guishing itself from the object the subject realises its freedom therefrom, and more so according as it more and more dissociates itself consciously from the objective. The free nature of the subject is intelligible from the very fact of its being a knowing principle. The knowing principle cannot be a part of the known continuum. It is only a *free* principle that is capable of distinguishing itself from what it knows. 'In virtue of his character as knowing, therefore', says Green, 'we are entitled to say that man is, according to a certain well-defined meaning of the term, "a free cause."'⁵

We have, therefore, to conclude that though the fact-hood of neither Being nor Becoming can be denied, we cannot form any *intelligible* conception of the relation between the foundational Being and the order of Becoming. To say that the latter is a 'creation', 'transformation', 'effect' or 'self-projection' of the former would only be applying to the subject the concepts that are properly applicable only to the Objective. Philosophical formulation, in so far as it bases itself on 'intelligible experience' can proceed no further than this.

THE LEGACY OF THE EAST TO THE WEST

'Europe and America are the spoiled child and grandchild of Asia, and have never quite realised the wealth of their inheritance. But if, now, we sum up those arts and ways which the West has derived from the East, or which, to our current and limited knowledge, appear first in the Orient, we shall find ourselves drawing up unconsciously an outline of civilization.'

'The first element of civilization is labor—tillage, industry, transport and trade. In Egypt and Asia we meet with the oldest known cultivation of the soil, the oldest irrigation systems, and the first production of those encouraging beverages without

which, apparently, modern civilization could hardly exist—beer and wine and tea. Handicrafts and engineering were as highly developed in Egypt before Moses as in Europe before Voltaire; building with bricks has a history at least as old as Sargon I; the potter's wheel and the wagon wheel appear first in Elam, linen and glass in Egypt, silk and gunpowder in China. The horse rides out of Central Asia into Mesopotamia, Egypt and Europe; Phoenician vessels circumnavigate Africa before the age of Pericles; the compass comes from China and produces a commercial revolution in Europe. Sumeria shows us the first business

contracts, the first credit system, the first use of gold and silver as standards of value; and China first accomplishes the miracle of having paper accepted in place of silver or gold.

'The second element of civilization is government—the organization and protection of life and society through the clan and the family, law and the state. The village community appears in India, and the city-state in Sumeria and Assyria. Egypt takes a census, levies an income-tax, and maintains internal peace through many centuries with a model minimum of force. Ur-Engur and Hammurabi formulate great codes of law, and Darius organizes, with imperial army and post, one of the best administered empires in the annals of government.

'The third element of civilization is morality—customs and manners, conscience and charity; a law built into the spirit, and generating at last that sense of right and wrong, that order and discipline of desire, without which a society disintegrates into individuals, and falls forfeit to some coherent state. Courtesy came out of the ancient courts of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia; even today the Far East might teach manners and dignity to the brusque and impatient West.

Monogamy appeared in Egypt, and began a long struggle to prove itself and survive in competition with the inequitable but eugenic polygamy of Asia. Out of Egypt came the first cry for social justice; out of Judea the first plea for human brotherhood, the first formulation of the moral consciousness of mankind.

'The fourth element of civilization is religion—the use of man's supernatural beliefs for the consolation of suffering, the elevation of character, and the strengthening of social instincts and order. From Sumeria, Babylonia and Judea the most cherished myths and traditions of Europe were derived; in the soil of the Orient grew the stories of the Creation and the Flood, the Fall and Redemption of man; and out of many mother goddesses came at last "the fairest flower of all poesy", as Heine called Mary, the Mother of God. Out of Palestine came monotheism, and the fairest songs of love and praise in literature, and the loneliest, lowliest, and most impressive figure in history.

'The fifth element in civilization is science—clear seeing, exact recording, impartial testing, and the slow accumulation of a knowledge objective enough to generate prediction and control.

Egypt develops arithmetic and geometry, establishes the calendar; Egyptian priest and physicians practise medicine, explore diseases enematically, perform a hundred varieties of surgical operation, and anticipate something of the Hippocratic oath. Babylonia studies the stars, charts the zodiac, and gives us our division of the month into four weeks, of the clock into twelve hours, of the hour into sixty minutes, of the minute into sixty seconds. India transmits through the Arabs her simple numerals and magical decimals, and teaches Europe the subtleties of hypnotism and the technique of vaccination.

'The sixth element of civilization is philosophy—the attempt of man to capture something of that total perspective which in his modest intervals he knows that only infinity can possess; the brave and hopeless inquiry into the first causes of things, and their final significance; the consideration of truth and beauty, of virtue and justice, of ideal men and states. All this appears in the Orient a little sooner than in Europe: the Egyptians and the Babylonians ponder human nature and destiny, and the Jews write immortal comments on life and death, while Europe tar-

ries in barbarism; the Hindus play with logic and epistemology at least as early as Parmenides and Zeno of Elea; the Upanishads delve into metaphysics, and Buddha propounds a very modern psychology some centuries before Socrates is born. And if India drowns philosophy in religion, and fails to emancipate reason from hope, China resolutely secularizes her thought, and produces, again before Socrates, a thinker whose sober wisdom needs hardly any change to be a guide to our contemporary life, and an inspiration to those who would honorably govern states.

'The seventh element of civilization is letters—the transmission of language, the education of youth, the development of writing, the creation of poetry and drama, the stimulus of romance, and the written remembrance of things past. The oldest schools known to us are those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, even the oldest schools of government are Egyptian. Out of Asia, apparently, came writing; out of Egypt the alphabet, paper and ink; out of China, print. The Babylonians seem to have compiled the oldest grammars and dictionaries, and to have collected the first libraries; and it may well be that the universities of India prece-

ded Plato's Academy. The Assyrians polished chronicles into history, the Egyptians puffed up history into the epic, and the Far East gave to the modern world those delicate forms of poetry that rest all their excellence on subtle insights phrased in a moment's imagery. Nabonidus and Ashurbanipal, whose relics are exhumed by archaeologists, and some of the fables that amuse our children go back to ancient India.

'The eighth element of civilization is art—the embellishment of life with pleasing color, rhythm and form. In its simplest aspect—the adornment of the body—we find elegant clothing, exquisite jewellery and scandalous cosmetics in the early ages of Egyptian, Sumerian and Indian civilization. Fine furniture, graceful pottery, and excellent carving in ivory and wood fill the Egyptian tombs. Surely the Greeks must have learned something of their skill in sculpture and

architecture, in painting and bas-relief, not only from Asia and Crete, but from the masterpieces that in their day still gleamed in the mirror of the Nile. From Egypt and Mesopotamia Greece took the models for her Doric and Ionic columns; from those same lands came to us not merely the column but the arch, the vault, the clearesty and the dome; and the *ziggurats* of the ancient Near East have had some share in moulding the architecture of America today. Chinese painting and Japanese prints changed the tone and current of nineteenth century European art; and Chinese porcelain raised a new perfection for Europe to emulate. The sombre splendor of the Gregorian chant goes back age by age to the plaintive songs of exiled Jews gathering timidly in scattered synagogues.

'These are some of the elements of civilization, and a part of the legacy of the East to the West.'

—“*The Story of Civilization.*”

HOW HINDUISM BECAME DYNAMIC ONCE AGAIN

By Swami Aseshananda

The political subjugation of India at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought in its wake cultural degradation. Educated men began to ape their European *gurus* losing all faith in their ancient tradition and heritage. There was a great number of anglicised Hindus who found delight in relentlessly attacking ideas and ideals inherited from their past. The teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads were considered as mere fabrications and worthy only to be thrown unceremoniously to the scrap-heap. The young Indian was subjected to such a strong and continuous suggestion of his inferiority that it was a wonder that any spirit of self-assertion has at all survived. He was told that he had no glorious past that the history of his country was lacking in great personalities, that the progressive West was superior to immobile East and the old-world civilisation, and therefore his only chance of making himself the equal of the western people was by giving up his barbarism and making himself civilised as much like his civilised western teachers and rulers as possible.

• It was Raja Rammohan Roy, the noble son of Mother India, who first opened the

eyes of the youths of the time deluded by the glamour of the West. He pointed out the beauty and excellence of Indian civilisation which has withstood the shocks of so many invasions. He unlocked the gates of India's immense resources and showed the undying treasures that lay hidden within her bosom. He tackled all the pressing problems of the day, social, educational and religious. He gave a rational interpretation of Hindu scriptures based on the Vedanta philosophy and tried to bring about a reconciliation between the different warring sects of Hindu society. Although a close student of the Bible, he was dead against conversion. He brought into the lime-light the power and wisdom of the Rishis and checked the furious tide of proselytisation which was producing disastrous results. He gave a theistic interpretation to Vedanta and saved it from the hands of pseudo-religionists who were either rank atheists or materialists. He absorbed into his creed the best elements of other great religions and incorporated in the Hindu faith the monotheism of Islam and the ethics of Christianity and gave an impetus to our ancient faith by preaching the doctrine of the oneness of

God. He had in him the fire of an apostle which brought conviction to vacillating minds. The Raja was the first Hindu to conceive the grand idea of a synthetic religion by harmonizing the ideals of the East and the West.

After his passing away his mantle fell on Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the father of the myriad-minded poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. The Maharshi handed on the torch to a young man of robust faith and invincible courage, Keshab Chandra, who became the mighty champion of his cause. Keshab Chandra worked and preached vigorously and carried his mission to far off lands. By his silvery eloquence and dynamic personality he enlisted the sympathy of many western savants and brought under his banner a good number of ardent followers who looked upon him as their friend, philosopher and guide. A born orator and a celebrated preacher, Keshab, the reputed leader of the Brahmo movement of the day, soon became the idol of the youth and a prominent figure on the forum of every progressive movement.

An event of far-reaching importance in the life of Keshab Chandra was his meeting with Sri Ramakrishna in

the year 1875. It was like the holy confluence of two sacred rivers joining together to produce an everlasting unity. The tie of friendship and love which was forged on that day ripened into a spiritual bond which was never sundered. The first acquaintance made them fast friends. Intimacy grew 'by the renewal and exchange of visits. Long hours were spent in healthy discussion and solution of spiritual problems. They would forget the passing of time, being lifted to a region of transport and divine felicity. Sri Ramakrishna would sometimes visit Keshab in his Lily cottage, at Calcutta. Every year on the anniversary day of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshab would either go to Dakshineswar with his party or invite Sri Ramakrishna to his Samaj, the meeting place of all his devotees. Most of the important lay and Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were profoundly influenced by Keshab Chandra and it was through him that they came to know of the saint of Dakshineswar. They came to identify themselves with each other so much that when Sri Ramakrishna heard that Keshab was no more, he felt as if a part of his body were paralysed. He shed tears and said, 'Mother, with whom shall I talk hereafter ?'

The ideal for which both these personages worked with unflagging zeal was the establishment of universal brotherhood inspired by the integrity and solidarity of all faiths. But it was the unique distinction of Sri Ramakrishna to have practised all the various disciplines enjoined by Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity and established on the bedrock of first-hand experience the truth that all true religions lead to the temple of the ineffable spirit. He illumined the pregnant saying of the Vedic seers, '*Ekam sat viprah bahuddha vadanti*', Truth is one but sages designate it by various names. He observed that rituals and ceremonies need not be dispensed with. They have great efficacy for an aspiring soul but may be discarded by those who are adepts in the field. He was the living embodiment of the teachings of the Upanishads. He saw the diversity of human nature as a necessity. And so his aim was not to effect a dull uniformity through standardization but preserve the distinctive characteristics of each sect and of each individual by allowing it freedom in the matter of worship and in the choice of the ideal. He would very often say: 'Remain always strong and steadfast in your own faith but eschew all

bigotry and intolerance. Just as sedge does not grow in large pure water tanks, clique does not form in a party whose adherents are guided by pure and unselfish motives'. He would always exhort a Hindu to be a better Hindu, a Muslim, a better Muslim and a Christian, a better Christian as every religion according to him was as good as any other, provided it was followed in the proper attitude and with right spirit. Sri Ramakrishna preached to the world that spirituality was not the monopoly of any particular sect or community. He taught that religion was a matter of realization and not a mere allegiance to this view or that. He came to quicken and revitalize all creeds by emphasising the practical side of religion. Small wonder then that Sri Ramakrishna with his life and teachings illumined the dynamic side of Hinduism and that his name crossed the bounds of the country of his birth. How he appealed to the west is brightly brought out in the masterly words of Romain Rolland: 'Sri Ramakrishna was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people and a great symphony of the thousand voices and thousand faiths of mankind.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

"Villages and Towns as Social Patterns": by Dr. Benoy Kumar Sarkar. (Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta). Pages XVI + 686. Price Rs. 15.

Dr. Sarkar, an original thinker and sociologist of great eminence, is the author of several works of outstanding merit on sociology, economics, etc. The present work is an extensive study in the processes and forms of societal transformations and progress. That is to say, "villages and towns have been used" in this study, as pegs on which to hang the topics relating to sociations."

The work consists of five parts. Social patterns and their transformation are discussed in Part I, while the sociology of general urbanization is dealt with in Part II. The sociology of hyper-urbanization, and the analysis of social forces in the rural configuration are the subject matter of Parts III and IV respectively. The theory of social progress as creative disequilibrium forms the topic of the last part. The scope of sociology in relation to rural-urban studies is given as an appendix to the work.

Villages and towns are essentially administrative, and not economic or political or sociological, categories, and the difference between them is one of quantity. Migrations, both transient and permanent, play a dominant role in the creation and remaking of the village or town forms. Industrial revolution has broken the rhythm of family life, agricultural economy and rural community everywhere. On the other hand, attempts are being made to revive the folk-songs and folk dances associated with the neo-socialism of to-day. This urbanization of villages and the ruralization of towns, known as "rurbanization" is almost a universal phenomenon throughout the world today. Consequently, it is not possible to make out any ideological distinction between the village and

town. As the village is thus influenced and transformed by the town, the "back to village" movement is nothing but urbanization and expansion of town ideology.

Rural-urban morphologies, Castes as social configuration, The Housing Complex, The Acharas, Folkways and Sitten as Social Forces, Food and nutrition in social metabolism, Villages and Towns in Health and Disease are some of the topics that have been exhaustively dealt with. By far the most interesting portion of the book is Part V, which deals, as has been said above, with the theory of Progress as creative disequilibrium. The problem of evil, and the problem of perfection or finality, in the theories of progress are subjects which deserve to be brought to the prominent notice of all philosophers and thinkers alike.

The author's views on certain topics such as divorce and the re-marriage of widows cannot be shared by all. Divorce, he says, is a spiritual necessity, and in order that widow re-marriage may grow in popularity he suggests that men and women should come into more frequent social contacts, i.e., the social pattern "of falling in love" should come into existence in India.

One of the author's prophesy is that "by 1970 a triangular contest between Russia, America and Germany may be the dominant fact of world-politics", and "by that time Japan as the champion of the emancipation of Asia from Eur-America and the embodiment of modern Asian Imperialism may happen to be equipped enough to have her mettle tested in the international competition for world-hegemony". (Pages 563-564). The contingency expected by the author in the third generation of the twentieth century seems to be happening one generation earlier, and today the world is witnessing a disastrous and devastating war.

In dealing with the stages of creative disequilibrium in India, the authors' suggestion is not helpful.

He states that as international world stands at present, "the freedom of Indian Hindus and Muslims can then mean only the development of democratic and socialistic institutions for them and by them within the British Empire. And for the security of this freedom-in-democracy or democracy-in-freedom substantial power will have to be left with or granted afresh to the British army, navy and air-force" (Pages 569-570). He however says that this is a temporary measure and India is not going to stop at this point.

Each and every chapter of the book is illustrated with a wealth of statistical information drawn from India as well as from abroad. Concrete examples from countries representing the most varied stages of civilisation, such as America, England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the Balkan states and Latin America, have been given as realistic aids to the comprehension of the social processes and patterns discussed. Several charts illustrating the author's equation of comparative demography have also been included in order to help general orientations.

In regard to progress, thinkers should not have faith in a goal. "Progress is indefinite, indetermi-

nate, endless but always in the form of a disequilibrium or struggle between good and evil, and therefore constant insecurity and eternal restlessness. This disequilibrium is by nature evolutive or creative and is normally manifest in the intuitions, urges, ambitions and adventures of youth". (Page VIII) Real, effective, spiritual leaders of the world, i.e., the remakers of mankind are the young men and women between the ages of 16 and 30 and to these the book is appropriately dedicated.

The printing and get-up of the Calcutta Oriental Press leave nothing to be desired.

G. T.

Sri Krishnaraja Memorial Number of the Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society : Published by the Mythic Society, Daly Memorial Hall, Cenotaph Road, Bangalore City.

Every patriotic Mysorean ought to be proud of this decent publication which contains over two dozens of scholarly papers on the various aspects of Mysore history and its late lamented illustrious Ruler. It is a worthy document revealing the historical importance of Mysore for over a thousand years past. This illustrated volume deserves to be kept in all libraries that have a place for Indology.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The annual report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot shows good progress in its educational and philanthropic activities.

The Gurukul.—During the year the English 3rd standard was opened in the Vivekananda Gurukul and three rooms were constructed adjoining the central hall of the Boarding house. The number of students in the school was 71 and in the Boarding house 32. In the Gurukul instruction is imparted in music, handicrafts, tailoring and physical culture.

Library & Reading Room.—The library contains 3,530 books and the Reading Room gets 7 periodicals and 8 newspapers. Both are open to the public.

The Ashrama has translated and published in Gujarati, *Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasang*, Vol. iii, *Song of the Sannyasin* and a *Short Life of Sri Ramakrishna*.

The Dispensary.—During the year the total number of patients treated in the Ramakrishna Centenary Dispensary was 20,178. Minor surgical cases were also undertaken.

On every Sunday the Gurukul boys along with the House master and Ashramites went round different localities of Rajkot town and rendered medical aid wherever necessary. Weekly doles of grain, clothes, and medicines were also given to the poor.

The total receipts for the year was Rs. 16,647-10-10 $\frac{1}{2}$ and the total expenditure under different heads was Rs. 14,226-15-0 thus leaving a balance of Rs. 2,420-11-10 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Permanent endowments, houses to accommodate the Library and residential quarters for the Gurukul boys are the immediate needs of the Ashrama. The president appeals to sympathisers for help to carry on its activities.

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDAJI'S TOUR

Swami Vireswarananda, one of the Asst. General secretaries of the Ramakrishna Math & Mission, left Belur on the 16th December for S. India. Halting at Bhuvaneswar, Puri, Vizagapatam and Madras on the way he reached the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Perianaikapalayam on the 30th December. There he presided over the conference of the representatives of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Centres in S. India on the 30th December 1941 and 1st January '42. After the conference he left for Ceylon and arrived at Colombo on the 8th January. From there he visited Kandy and Nuwara Eliya. On the 18th January, he gave a lecture at the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, on 'Religion in our daily life'. He then visited the Mission schools at Batticaloa, Trincomale and Jaffna. At Batticaloa a public reception was organised in his honour and an address was presented to him.

On the evening of 22nd January the Swami delivered a lecture at the Vivekananda Society, Anuradhapura. On the 23rd evening the Swami left for India and reached Trivandrum on the 27th. After visiting the various centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in

Travancore, Cochin and Malabar he has come back to Madras.

His Speech at the Conference

Great souls like Buddha and Christ are always prompted to share their peace and blessedness with others who are groping in darkness and are stricken by misery. They spend themselves up in speaking to their people so that they may change their lives and turn away from the world and lead a life of peace and blessedness. This urge of these great souls to spread their gospel is also imbibed by their immediate followers. In some cases the great souls themselves have commanded their followers to spread their new gospel of hope to mankind. It is interesting to note here how these immediate followers and the generations that followed them were able to preserve the new gospel and hand it on to future generations. History shows us that such a spiritual revelation has never been preserved by mere material or intellectual manipulation but only by self-consecration of souls to the new ideal. The spiritual message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda has also brought into existence a new order of monks consecrated to this new spiritual revelation. This consecration is the best method of perpetuating such a revelation and also the best way to understand them and their message. This should be the basic foundation of this organisation.

Swami Vivekananda, however, has shown us the mistake India had committed of late in completely eschewing the material side of life from the religious, though that was not the ideal set up by Hinduism. Such a complete separation has stunted the growth of religion. Hinduism had set up a fourfold ideal of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The first three are also necessary as part of an integral scheme which stands for a spiritual ideal for individuals and nations. That is why Swamiji said, "Such Maths we must establish all over

the world. Some countries stand in need of spirituality, whereas others are in need of a few worldly amenities. We must lead nations and individuals to the realm of spirituality through paths suited to them by fulfilling the respective wants that such nations or individuals may be suffering from. India needs the spread of education and religious ideas among the masses. It is, however, impossible for hungry men to become spiritual unless food is provided for them. Therefore, above all, our paramount duty is to show the masses new ways of getting food". From this we find that we as followers of these two great souls, Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna cannot possibly avoid activity in our religious life in this organisation.

Nevertheless, we must always be careful to see that we do not run out in action. Work happens to be much easier than the struggle for the attainment of spiritual and intellectual culture. And with our natural preference for the easier path there is the danger of spending ourselves up in action. Our activities are growing in volume and variety. This, however, is inevitable and also to be welcomed to a great extent. We should see that we are neither influenced by the old school of thought which holds out 'inactivity' as the ideal for Sannyasins nor overpowered by Tamas. At the same time we have to remember one thing: our activity is likely to degenerate into mere philanthropy or social service and lose the essential spiritual background if due to this ever-increasing activity we lose sight of the spiritual vision. In that case all our work would be useless. The West is replete with philanthropic institutions, social service, leagues, etc., and yet why is the West in this miserable condition today? It is due to want of spiritual vision. To impart this spiritual vision to others we will have to be

spiritual ourselves. This is the great responsibility on our shoulders—to be men ourselves, and help others to be men, as the great Swami Vivekananda put it. Therefore, we must remember this thing at every step and see that the spiritual fire kindled in us by the great souls is not choked up by too much activity. Such work would not only retard our spiritual growth but would also give us no time for intellectual culture which is so very essential if we want to avoid degradation of the Order.

Again, with respect to our secular activities in various fields—educational, medical, etc., want of training and proper equipment would make our work less and less efficient though it may be increasing in volume. I do realise that love and sincerity of purpose are very important and that, one who has these, though without talents, is able to do much more than one with mere intellectual equipments. But what I mean is, while that love has to be there, to think that that alone is sufficient and would achieve the best results is to subject ourselves to self-deception. To achieve the necessary standard of intellectual and spiritual culture it is absolutely necessary not to lose ourselves in our activities nor be carried away by our initial success and public approbation. We should not be too ambitious for that would work disastrously on ourselves, on the efficiency of the institutions and what is worse, on the cultural life of the inmates.

The object of this conference, I should think, is to take stock of such vital things and I hope all our discussions and exchange of views will help us to know exactly where we stand and I am sure we will be better and wiser for such discussions and stock taking.

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

By S. S. Suryanarayana Sastr, M.A., B.Sc., Bar-at-Law

I have once before paid my tribute to Sri Ramakrishna; conscious as I was and am of the inadequacy of that performance, I had no desire to repeat it. But despite my unwillingness, I had to give in and consent to speak this evening. For myself I can say of Ramakrishna's life, as Arjuna said of Krishna's glory "*bhuyah kathayah triptir hi srinavato nasti me 'mrityam*". But the utilitarian generation we live in will brook no idle recital of an old tale, unless some lesson can be drawn for our present needs. Hence the title and the substance of my talk.

The most outstanding feature of our lives today is fear. We go about in suspense and anxiety not knowing what doom will befall us and when. We hear harrowing tales of what happened to our neighbours, if not our kith and kin and we wonder if the same or a worse fate is in store for us. When we are not stupefied into inaction or a mechanical round of

routine, we flee with as much of our belongings as we can, leaving behind if at all only the heaviest and least transportable, not necessarily the least useful. We even shed anticipatory tears of grief, since if the worst should happen, we shall not be in a condition to weep. Ever querulous we scan the newspaper columns and glue our ears to the radio; even the propaganda of lies and counter-lies seems preferable to silence. Our nerves are so keyed up that even the instinct of self-preservation may give way to a fatal curiosity, as with some of our lamented brethren in Rangoon. What a contrast our lives present to that of Ramakrishna who lived in the service of the dread deity, Kali, whose one desire during his days of

spiritual struggle was for Her manifestation, whose one bliss was the realisation of the Mother's Presence except when by Her own Grace, he had attained *nirvikalpa samadhi*! The Divine Mother has many forms, some pleasing to all, others repellent to the majority, all equally sublime and redounding to Her glory. Nothing is more calculated to terrify the irreverent and the unwary than the figure of Kali, though none is more fully expressive of divine grace and love. Her face is dark as the autumnal clouds, but is lit up with a dazzling smile, white as the snow-white cranes, the sight of whose flight sent Rama-krishna into his first ecstasy, she is '*mahattahasa dhavalikrita digantara*'. Though she is most cruel (*mahakrura*), towards the base and the worthless, she bears a most gracious form (*prasannarupa-dharini, sundari*). Her waist is decked with hands and round her neck is a garland of skulls; because she is the destroyer of the scheming and the grabbing, the clinging and the keeping, which is all they have stood for. Her might destroys our baseness so that our inner glory that is Herself may stand revealed and at one with Her. She kills us lest we should whirl for ever in our present round of mutual destruction. We

forget that we are sons of the Immortal, that what really quickens us is nectar, not blood, the shedding of which we bewail in the sacrifice, but would accommodate ourselves to in the business of life. Blood is a symbol, of the seemingly precious but really worthless in us, our closed visions and hungering lives, ever-seeking, never satisfied. No wonder Vivekananda asked his shocked disciple Nivedita "Why not a little blood to complete the picture?" For all that our faculties as well as our being appear limited and imperfect, we would fain pile up achievements and possessions. We would spurn the real infinitude, but for which even our present finitude would not be apparent, but would seek a spurious infinitude of acquisitions. Since self-transcendence would appear difficult and useless, we would perpetuate ourselves in wealth and fame, in children and relatives. We would fill the earth with people of our blood, our colour, our culture; and when the outraged earth protests, we cry aloud for *Lebensraum* and wage war on our neighbours. Not for this were we endowed with heads and hands. If there is a Power and a Purpose in the Universe, is it not intelligible that it should will the des-

truction of those who have made such miserable use of their talents, so that they may after a while, rise again with clearer visions and better equipment, to wage war against their own baseness instead of amongst themselves? This power is Mother Kali. He who worships Her must have conquered fear, the fear which springs from avarice and envy, blindness and lust. Such a devotee sees nothing in the Universe but Her presence and Her plan; he does not see himself as alien to Her; hence he has no more fear for himself; he has realised the religion that is fearlessness (*abhayam*). It is as such a realised soul, that we have to honour Ramakrishna today.

What we see around us is not pleasant; but we have not to flee therefrom; for we cannot flee far, or for long, before the spectre overtakes us. We have to face it rather, and endure the unpleasant as well as the pleasant, as alike the fruit of our stock of Karma, accumulated perforce in our ignorant and greedy pursuit of what we thought good. We have to get used to the view that all our possessions and our lives themselves, are as nothing to the Eternal Life that pulses in all of us alike; our values are fragments of that Value,

our pleasures a fraction of that Bliss. It can be neither sought nor held, since it is ourselves. All else derives from it and should be dedicated to it; what is not so dedicated hastens on the way to perdition. Realisation of the Mother is not for this or that end, not even for the sake of the extinction of fear; these and other consequences may follow, but should be spurned, as they were by Ramakrishna. The worship of Mother is for Her own sake, not for any baser end, nor indeed for any end whatsoever. Hence the prolonged anguish and travail, the long torment and discipline, the years of intense self-education as to the triviality of wealth and fame, and the terrific moments of suicidal despair that preceded the realisation. We have to cut off our heads and arms figuratively if not literally; we have to give the quietus to our intellectuality and our possessiveness, our verbal gymnastics, our mental agility and our manual dexterity. To Her these are aids; to us they are but hindrances, so long as we have not achieved the vision of non-difference from Her, so long as She has not revealed Herself to us and *in* us. And that vision will not come, until we give up seeking, until we dedicate ourselves wholly to Her,

without any reservation, for Her to do as She wills, in the full confidence that She will never destroy what in us is worth preserving since that is Her own self. When there is no longing there is no fear. Ramakrishna's sole fear was lest he should die without the vision of the Mother; when that longing was satisfied, he had no more fear. If we try to follow the advice of the English song (dating from World War I) to "pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag" we shall find that bag repeatedly bursting open through over-fullness; should we but pack them in the vast trunk of *akasa*, flinging our cares to the quarters, as all property is the Lord's and all well-being is His care, there would be nothing to pack; nor even any need to repack. Fatalism is bad, shocked sentimentalism is worse; we have to accept all that She wills, not because we are *pro-pelled* by forces from without or *im-pelled* from within by our limited desires and purposes, but because we are *com-pelled*, by the Life that is our life, the Power that pulses *in, with* and *through* us, is our Truest Being.

It is this religion which was Ramakrishna's, as also of many others before and after him, that may yet save us if we are worth saving,

and dispel our fears. Glib talk will not help us nor skill in dialectic; much less will the sciences save us, inspired as they are almost throughout by the desire for mastery of nature, animate and inanimate. Nature can be dominated only by her proper mistress, *ajajaitri*: our attempts to usurp Her place and power can lead but to a fall like that of Lucifer. This mortal sin is shared by all current ideologies, with very few exceptions; and the exceptions reveal the same spirit as Ramakrishna, who scorned all worldly learning at an early age, since their pursuit had the sole aim of worldly success. What shall I gain? How can I be better off than my neighbour? How can I dominate my surroundings? These are the burden of their quest; and from such science man has little ultimate good to hope for, though of temporary satisfaction he may gain a little. The Hindu caste system may have been bad for India, but the scientist's caste system is ruinous to the world. The scientific spirit would embrace relativity, but would eschew God; the scientists are certain about uncertainty, but would deny the certainty that is basic even to this certitude; they would hail Einstein, who kept his Judaism and his

science in water-tight compartments, but would spurn Eddington the Quaker who speculates on the philosophy of science. And the complaint is not peculiar to the physical sciences; the psychologist with his behaviourism and libido, the economist with his ignorance of all values except the economically measurable and adjustable, the political scientist with his devices for the manipulation of end-seeking automata, the metaphysician scornful of interference from science and religion alike with not an ounce of experience to match his tons of logic, all these are evils of the age, consequent on a de-spiritualised, and hence unworthy, pursuit of ends not in themselves unworthy. Instead of loving wisdom, they have sought knowledge as an acquisition; and if they find that the charms of their acquisition decay, that is no wonder, since they got but the shell without the substance, the body without the spirit. And this is one more lesson we have to learn of Ramakrishna, to prize only that knowledge which is an end in itself and treat all other disciplines as worthful only as accessory thereto. Our saint was also a sage; he was a *bhakta* without, but a *jnanin* within; he was wise, though it is notorious that in

the ordinary sense he was almost illiterate. This wisdom is not inconsistent with literacy; it comes to an Aurobindo or a Ramana as much as to Ramakrishna; but book-learning (or even scientific lore) should not be confounded with wisdom, which is a matter not of remote cognition, but immediate, integral experience. The sage's scale of values and certitude may well appear topsy-turvy to the scientist. The latter bases himself on the finite and the contingent though he is forced to admit its unsatisfactory character from any ultimate standards; to fortify himself in this position he scoffs at those who seek any ultimacy. The sage knows the contingent as contingent, but in the light of the eternal which alone, he realises, can reveal itself as well as the contingent. Hence it is that Ramakrishna told the Vivekananda-to-be that he saw God as clearly as he saw the questioner, but more intensely. The contingent is other-dependent for its manifestation, not the eternal. If the present day world could but forsake its cleverness and the craze for science and turn a little God-mad, there would still be hope for it.

The religions of the world divide, where they should unite; for they are the creeds

and cries that hold together a rabble, not the bond that unites oneself to one's true being ; they stand for professions, not for experience. It was given to Ramakrishna not merely to believe but to test out in his own experience the ultimate basic truth of Islam and of Christianity and of Hinduism in more than one of its frequently jarring sects. He realised that all true faiths drew from the same common spiritual fountain, though they used different receptacles and appellations. If our self-styled religious leaders would but give a fraction of their lives to this realisation, how far would they be from fighting about privileges and infractions and music before mosques ? The Hindu who would not lapse automatically into stillness in the serenity in and around a mosque, the Muslim who would not revere the God immanent in the music as well as in silence, are these really true to their respective faiths ? Not if we have to take Ramakrishna's experience for an answer. The aim of culture is to unify not to divide. It can but commit suicide by the creation of an Aryan Europe or a Pakistan in India, and if the partisans of such schemes do not realise their folly, it is in some considerable measure due to the

equal folly of their opponents whose counter-claims are no sounder than the claims, neither being based on wisdom or experience.

Our friends, the rationalists, are not more helpful than the bigots ; often, their critical faculty functions in respect of some faiths alone ; even where they are impartial iconoclasts, they can show nothing to hold on to, except the pitiful human cravings and appetites now denuded of all ideals ; the dethronement of the gods is but the precursor of anarchy, not of the enthronement of reason ; for reason, the useful hand-maid, is too bashful and sensible of her own defects to establish herself as the mistress, despite the exaggerated vociferations of her partisans. Religion, as devotion to what is relatively external to oneself, can be but relative ; Ramakrishna himself was fully aware of this non-ultimacy, especially after his initiation into *nirvikalpa samadhi* : that, however, does not justify disowning religion ; so long as he was in and of the world, not lost in ecstasy, he let himself be guided in all things by the Mother ; and if, when he crossed the great divide, he clove asunder the figure of the Divine Mother, it was with the sword of discrimination

which she herself gave; he progressed to the extreme limit, not in spite of religion, but because of it. If we could but devote a fraction of our time to the cultivation of this religious attitude which embraces all and sublimates all, instead of fostering petty jealousies, rivalries and suspicions, we would have gone far to save the world and ourselves; "svalpam apy asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat".

I shall refer to one more problem before I close. Besides destruction, sex is the other outstanding feature of our times. The first problem of the war is the war-baby. The last world-war brought on a questioning and a relaxation of earlier standards of sex-relationship; and the peace that followed intensified instead of clearing the confusion. Our own country has taken on a full share of this *haereditas damnosa*, along with the other benefits of membership in the Empire. I heard the other day an unkind but not wholly untrue critic say that while in old days our family women used to cover themselves elaborately our *danseuses* adopted clothing which would exhibit the limbs as required by their art. Now it is just the other way about. And other cynics have remarked that

while in Ancient India woman was the upholder of ideals and the redeemer of man, today she is clamouring for equal standards of *immorality*. All this is no doubt exaggerated; but of this too there can be no doubt that there is a great deal of unhealthy prurience and equally unhealthy prudery; we have neither the restraint of middle age nor the innocence of childhood but a more than half-abashed shamelessness, a more than half-fearful flouting of ideals and conventions, and our failure in what is a duty we seek to offset by exaggerated devotion to what is neither an obligation nor a value. Self-expression is flaunted, but the self is forgotten. We are sinning against our sisters, just as we have sinned against our brethren; and for the same reason, the non-recognition of the spirit that is in them as it is in us. To Ramakrishna, God and man, mother and wife, were all alike worshipful; they were all the Divine Mother, immanent in the woman of the streets, no less than in the saint of either sex. The wife whom he had wedded as a child was not to be shunned as a temptress; rather would he give himself to her if that were the Mother's wish expressed through her; but Sarada Devi would not demand the sacri-

fice and she had no cause to regret it. Our rationalist friends will ask what they got out of this great sacrifice, whether, on the contrary, Ramakrishna should not be castigated for his inhuman treatment of his child-wife. This we do know that husband and wife were supremely happy in the peace that passeth understanding, that they radiated bliss for long years to a large band of disciples and that this bliss has no equal in the hectic, physical ecstasies they are said to have missed. Of wifehood as blissful service, Sarada Devi had a full share; of its ordinary pleasures, she had little or nothing; whether the exchange was worth making, who are we to judge, when we are wholly given up to the one and know nothing of the other? The saint who felt on his own body the blows given by one boatman to another, who was so moved by the distress of Mathur Babu's tenants that he would not stir until their wants had been relieved, who recked nothing of his own illness and physical suffering when there was occasion to talk to and help those who came to see him, such a person would have been the last to condemn his self-chosen wife to a life of unwilling immolation. Suffering and regrets there

may have been occasionally; but these are a small price to pay for the inestimable boon that Saradamani gained.

But the guardians of our minds and our morals will not leave us in peace. Unlike the philosopher's stone whose touch ennobled what it came in contact with, modern science touches little that it does not debase under the euphemistic name of debunking. Ramakrishna said he saw no distinction between the Divine Mother he worshipped, the physical mother lodged in the music tower and Sarada Devi gently massaging his feet; this the modern psychologist would triumphantly exhibit as a sample of the Oedipus complex, a most unfortunate complication, which could have been avoided if the couple had led a normal sex life. The psychologist has to go a long way before he can prove his theory of origins; and even granting the origin does not conclude the question of value. Ramakrishna's worship of Sarada as Devi may have more or less remote connections with the tragic passion of Oedipus for Jocasta; but the two are poles asunder in respect of their worth.

Here come the moralists with their doubts: how are there differences of worth, for one who sees the Mother

in all, the prostitute as well as the saint? The question is irrelevant. Do we see the Mother equally in all? If so, the question cannot arise; if not, differences of worth exist and are binding on us. The loose woman is what she is because of her karma. If she should realise the Mother in herself, expressing Her will and purpose through this apparently debased life and acts, there would be no call for her to pity herself or be afraid of the world's ridicule; for, she would be a conscious and willing participator in the *lila*. The same may be said for any realised specta-

tor like Ramakrishna. For the rest of us differences exist and have to be respected, the first condition for their negation being the negation of the ego in absolute surrender. Such surrender we find ourselves largely unprepared for, even when it commands admiration as an occasionally realised ideal. That it may cease to be a mere ideal but become an increasing realisation in our own lives, this is the fervent prayer we should put up on this jayanti day of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. May his presence grant us peace and guide us to perfection.¹

SANKARA AND RAMANUJA

By S. Sampath Iyengar, M.A.

'Can Ramanuja ever be reconciled with Sankara?'—is the common question, put to me with an alternating stress on the two Acharyas, by my friends who are either pure Ramanujites knowing Sankara as he is represented in Sree Vaishnava books or by Sankarites who know Ramanuja by mere hearsay or from imperfect representations. The onus of giving a satisfactory solution carries with it the sting of displeasure of either party, if the solution leans to one of the teachers, or brings down on us the appellation of 'a man of confused thoughts'. The chief obstacle in the way of any harmony between the two schools of thought lies in the misrepresentation of the metaphysical problems which form the bed-rock of the two systems. I fear the Maya theory of

Sankara has not been clearly represented by any school of Vaishnavism, including that of Ramanuja. It is not my purpose here to enter into the details of the misrepresentation. A historical consideration of the two schools will be more helpful in arriving at a solution than any such examination of internal evidence. Sankara was a Vaishnava and preached Advaita¹, and Rama-

¹ 'It certainly cannot be amiss to point out here that there is very good evidence that he was himself an ardent Vaishnava . . . and that his higher pantheistic monism was in no way seriously incompatible with Vaishnavism in its form as the accepted religion of the ancient Bhagavatas'. (*Ramanuja and Vaishnavism* by Rao Bahadur Prof: M. Rangacharya, M.A.)

¹ The text of the speech delivered at the Birthday memorial meeting of Sri Ramakrishna on 22nd February, at the Math.

nuja was the son of an Advaitin born of a Sreevaishnava mother, who reverted to his mother's creed due to dissatisfaction with Yadavaprakasa's interpretation of Advaita.³ The Advaitic interpretation of life which Sankara imbibed from Govinda, the pupil of Goudapada, passed through a series of changes in doctrine and outlook.⁴ Yadavaprakasa of the 11th century formulated a separate interpretation of Sankara's Absolute, and this did not agree with the intuited Supreme of his pupil Ramanuja who had more of Vaishnava blood in him as is revealed from the several anecdotes of his life traditionally handed down among Sreevaishnavas. He showed a greater leaning to an unsystematized school of pan-synthetic monism⁵ which had all the attractions of Advaita providing a theistic ideal. The attempts of Dramida, Tanka, Guha and others towards systematization were not considered sufficient in the face of *Sankara Bhashya*.

The antinomy between the two schools of thought during Ramanuja's time was not very severe as at the present day. Ramanuja's pedigree is sufficient proof of this. Advaitins and Sreevaishnavas freely entered into marriage relations, and an Advaitin and a Visishtadvaitin lived under the same roof, with all freedom of association and love. This is clear indication that the two schools thrived side by side with imperceptible differences. In our times, we see that the two schools are completely segregat-

³ Ramanuja was the son of Kanti-mati, sister of Sree Sailapurna who was the disciple of Alavandar, the nominal Guru of Ramanuja.

⁴ There are three marked schools : i. Sankara's view; ii. Bhaskara's view known as Parinamavada; and iii. Yadava's view known as Bhedabhedavada.

⁵ This is the correct English equivalent of Visishtadvaita. Phrases like qualified monism, attributive monism are incorrect. (vide Introduction by Prof. Kuppuswami Sastri to *Ramanuja's Idea of the Finite Self*).

ted and even a friendship between a true Advaitin and a staunch Visishtadvaitin, not to speak of any matrimonial or other connections between the two, is not encouraged. When and why such a severe break occurred can hardly be understood. That the two schools did not find simultaneous patronage at the hands of Medieval South Indian Kings, and that the active sympathy of these royal patrons for one school meant a good deal of positive suffering for the other are matters well known to history. The line of cleavage was further stressed by the pride and prejudices of sectarians. Now that we have come to see the truth in every school of thinking, a proper understanding of the different religions and their respective basic philosophies is of immediate necessity. The modern professors, most of them at any rate, are satisfied by teaching the philosophies of Ramanuja, Sankara or Purnaprajna or writing on the philosophies underlying their religions. The bearing of the respective philosophies on life or their interpretation in terms of the respective esoteric prescriptions, is very scarcely attempted and the only book of the kind is Nalini Kanta Brahma's *The Philosophy of Hindu Sadhanas*. Even this leans more on the Advaitic interpretation of the Sadhanas. The respective values of the schools in their metaphysics are never harmonized except by some who, by Yogic experience, have realised the truth in every religion and have stated that God appears to the devotee in just the same way as the devotee desires. The Upanishadic Rishis have proclaimed the same truth. An eminent modern westerner, Mr. Bucke, in his book *Cosmic Consciousness* has specifically stated that those who enter into cosmic consciousness do not come out in plain colours and give the world the full benefit of their realizations (P. 141) and the several reports correspond in all essentials though in detail they doubtless more or less differ. (P. 128) Modern psychology has imparted a greater

impetus to the moulding of our minds towards such a sympathetic and synthetic understanding of the seemingly divergent philosophies and religions.

How to understand Sankara.—Sankara has never stated that Maya is a category superimposed on Brahman. He only means that how the one Brahman becomes the manifold is not expressible (*Anirvachaniya*). The intuition of a contentless oneness in *Asamprajnata Samadhi* cannot be washed away by any amount of skill in dialectics. Reason can never rise to the highest pitch of psychic expression and the highest expression of life can only appear in self-conscious dialect. Mr. Bucke has unequivocally explained that language is only a tally of the self-conscious state and can express *only approximately* the cosmic experience. This is within the experience of many mystics as well, 'who are propelled by the fragrance remaining in their heart'. There is the cosmic experience of oneness but how to express it? A positive explanation errs always and as a matter of fact all the religionists except Sankara have erred to this extent by saying in positive terms that the content of cosmic experience is so and so. But as Prof. Radhakrishnan states, Sankara in the East and Bradley in the West have taken the wisest course of agnosticism that it is inexpressible (*Anirvachaniya*). One Upanishadic seer also has exclaimed that the 'One' is beyond all expressions of mind and speech (*Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha*) and that it can only be intuited (Ka. Up. I, 2, 13). If *Adhyasadhikarana* of Sankara Bhashya is carefully studied divesting ourselves of all predetermined convictions, we cannot but concur with his way of expression. Much of the animosity towards his theory of Maya is due to misunderstanding. Even Ramanuja has pointed out seven inconsistencies in accepting Maya (*Ashrayecha tirodhane svarupanirvachatvayoh pramane badhake badhye syuh saptanupapattayah*).

But Sankara's Maya is by itself the cosmic principle of inconsistency and not a category. This basic factor has been misunderstood by many Advaitins even and totally misinterpreted by Visishtadvaitins. We should never forget that in India, philosophy is the knowledge of religious experience and there can never be diverse experiences of the one. They may require different expressions in accordance with the minds soaring in different levels. 'The mystics of the world belong to the same brotherhood and have striking family likeness.' (Sir Radhakrishnan's *The Hindu View of Life*)

How is it that Ramanuja then has criticised the Maya theory is a salient retort. The answer is very simple. It is not from Sankara that Ramanuja learnt his Maya conception but from Yadavaprakasa who was only a highly cultured Sankarite. Sankara only used the parlance of his days to defeat the ruling thought viz., Buddhism. It is only in Buddhism that Maya means illusion. Maya is familiar to Upanishadic seers as 'The creative power of the Almighty' (Svcs. Up.) Even Badarayana does not mean illusion by Maya when he mentions it in his Sutra III, 2, 3, (*vide Sacred books of the East* Vol. XXXIV Introduction) and Sankara cannot on any account be ignorant of these facts. His diplomatic way of dealing with his society can be appreciated only by another yogi of his type. Naturally these predispositions of his mind were not made very clear by Yadavaprakasa to Ramanuja. 'Reporters possessing only self-consciousness blurred still further the picture; because they possessing only semi-consciousness and understanding very imperfectly what the teacher wished to convey, still further distorted the record.' (Bucke on *Cosmic Consciousness*). For these reasons, the important fact of the unity of the teachings of those men has been generally overlooked. What the Maya theory is supposed to mar the acumen of Sankara can as well be attributed to the Karma theory

of Hinduism as a whole. Karma is Anadi and destructible. What Sankara has done is to carry this to a cosmic level and call it 'The Maya' or the principle of cosmic illusion. Understanding this Maya to be a category, Ramanuja has shown the seven inconsistencies but it is not a category as is already shown. He understands Sankara's Isvara as the Brahman stained with the slush of illusion and formulates his theory of karma in such a manner that it neither touches the Brahman nor the selves (Jivatmas). Just as a king out of love for his subjects goes and lives in a hut unaffected by his surroundings, so the Parabrahman lives as Antaryamin in the cosmos. Karma affects only the Dharmabhuṭajñanas of selves bringing about the contraction and expansion of its all-pervasiveness. Thereby he postulates the theory that Karma cannot stain the selves either. But, Sankara's Brahman is not under the stress of any existing category but appears as such. It is analogous to the illusion of mistaking the twine as a serpent where the principle of serpent does not exist before him but is imagined. This is also analogous to the *Vikalpajnana* of Patanjali where a hare is imagined to have horns. These two analogies which are being adopted in Sanskrit texts, are mainly responsible for the misunderstanding of the maya theory of Sankara. The former is one form of Bhrama (*atadvati tatprakarakam jnanam*) and the latter, another (*Sabda jnananupate vastu sunyo vikalpa-sasavishanavat, gaganaṇapushpavat*) where the two factors that exist, are either superimposed upon each other or brought into an imaginable relation of a content and a container. But Sankara's Maya solves the problem as a whole and is a peculiar cosmic Brahman where the one factor involved is Brahman and the other, an imaginary factor (Maya) imaginarily superimposed on Brahman by all of us working as we are under the stress of instincts and habits (karma). Brahman does

not become over-powered by Maya but we for ourselves see Him as such. There is no question of stain on Him. He is ever pure. This, the Visishtadvaitins cannot grasp possessed, as they are, by the twilight of realism and consequently is not admitted by them.

How to understand Ramanuja.—But merely on this account it cannot be said that Ramanuja's mysticism is essentially different from that of Sankara. What Sankara understood by *Satyam jnanam anantam Brahma* (Tait. Up.) is not essentially different from Ramanuja's intuition. An analytical survey is beyond the intention of this monograph. But, yet the point of reconciliation must be made clear. Sankara understood Jnanam as contentless whereas Ramanuja understood it as a substantive intelligence possessing an inseparable attributive intelligence on the analogy of a light and its rays. I may even dare to express that Ramanuja's Bhashya is the maximum expression in the self-conscious level, of the mysticism of Sankara and this is how I understand Dr. Thibout's eulogy of Ramanuja that he is more true to the text than Sankara. Truth of the import of the *prasthanatraya* is the ideal of expression and it is here that Sankara is enigmatic. The contentless one of Sankara is the one full of its own essence as attribute, of Ramanuja. This ideal of expression can approach Sankara's realization at a tangent and at the same time satisfy the ethical ego of man seeking highest satisfaction individually. The passivity of the selves in the intuition of the oneness in the *Asamprajnata samadhi*, is the absence of any possession of individuation. It is a state wherein the selves are rendered mediums of the supreme. That Supreme is all pure and it works through the finite selves who are ever in a state of passivity though working for God. The Jnanam of the selves is gradually carried beyond the degenerated ego of Ahamkara and Mamakara and

made to subsist in its essence of passivity though ever active with the purpose of Divinity. An unhindered flow of the Dharmabhutajnana of selves in the interest of the cosmos is the scheme and intention of Divinity. In this passive state there remain three factors only viz., selves, Dharmabhutajnana and God, selves as perceivers, qualitative jnana as the connecting link and God as the object. Jnanam is the predominant factor which has selves as substratum and points to God. When these two factors, the substratum and the object are merged in Jnanam we have approached Sankara's conception of a contentless one.

This one becomes the manifold (*Vivarta*) according to Sankara. Ramanuja changes it as the one sending forth legions of atomic forces (*Prabhavati*). According to Sankara, the one under the stress of cosmic illusion from our standpoint appears to analyse itself into the manifold and when it is removed, it remains in its original position. Does the regaining of one's own essence make it a passive principle of existence which is co-extensive with bliss and intelligence or provide a basis for infinite activity is a point on which Sankara is sagaciously silent. This is sufficient proof for the theory that Sankara's chief aim was merely to give a principle of existence in the void of Buddhists and thus create a metaphysics for them. The Bodhisattva theory of the Buddhists may in the absence of any specificness on the part of Sankara, be taken to be the ever active life after realization. The Jivanmukti state promising a totality after the fruition of karmas leaves the selves into the realm of the Bodhisattva and this state is nearest to the highest conception of life of eternal activity of Ramanuja. The teachings and expressions of those who have entered into *Asamprajnata Samadhi* that they will be living amidst us guiding us till the whole world gets into that state of oneness individually, pro-

vides a basis for this theory of an ever active state after realization and this is the finality of Ramanuja which feels the necessity of a personal God till eternity and He is naturally made a God of attributes. It may be warned here that Sankara's Saguna Brahman is not Ramanuja's Parabrahman though many are prone to commit this mistake.

Ramanuja's theory of creation is *Guna parinamavada* and that of Sankara *Brahma vivartavada*. It is doubtful whether Sankara assures us that his theory is purely *vivartavada*. (vide Br. Sutras II, i, 14)⁵ I fear Sankara is not explicit in this respect. Brahman is infinite. That infinite becomes limited as selves and matter. Does It persist untainted even after this? If It persists, it is a question of evolution when the Infinity evolving infinite finitudes, remains as Infinite. This does not satisfy Buddhists and so he did not express it. Further, if It does not persist, that does not come up to his intuition since it will be a transformation of the one as many and so he did not say so. The wisest course he therefore adopted is to bring in the principle of cosmic evolution and speak of its nature as *Anirvachaniya*. When once this principle is taken on hand, for all practical purposes, individual selves and multiple forms of matter are posited.

What is the nature of selves then according to the two schools? Sankara understands the selves to be all-pervading since they are limitations of the one only and Ramanuja carried his theory of light and its rays even to the selves. According to him, selves are monadic and their rays known as

⁵ Sankara says that Badarayana adopts the language of *parinamavada* to facilitate *saguna* concentration. This he has stated in all probability to satisfy the Buddhists. This is perhaps further evidence for Bhaskara viewing Sankara's as a *parinamavada*.

Dharmabhuṭajnana are all-pervading. He views the selves from three angles and calls them the modes (*niyamena prakara*), the attributes (*apṛithaksiddha viseshaṇa*) and the parts (*amsa*) of the whole ⁶. Brahman is the substantive *jnana* as a static principle and when kinetic it is attributive *Jnana*. The cosmic principle of attributiveness is personified in the conception of Lakshmi, the Universal Mother, from whom the manifold emanates. This is the intuition of Ramanuja and his school is aptly called the Sree Sampradaya of Vaishnavism. She is ever associated with Brahman as His bride, introducing all the individual selves to the mercy of Brahman. A surrender to Sree is the one and only esoteric method embraced by all the Visishtadvaitins and then the other prescriptions are taken as consequential ⁷. This conception leaves no room for practices of an impersonal concentration. But the Bhakti theory of Ramanuja based on the yoga practice of *Dhyana* provides

⁶ See *Vedarthasangraha* P. 11 where Ramanuja considers the selves as *Tadamsa*, *Tadvibhuti*, *Tatrupa* and *Tat-sarira*.

⁷ This aspect of Visishtadvaita is not understood by the majority of non-vaishnavites. This is the routine *prapatti* referred to in the earlier pages.

लक्ष्मीनाथ समारंभां नाथ्यामुन मध्यमाम् ।
अस्मदाचार्यं पर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपर्पराम् ॥

an ascending step of concentration into Lakshmi and through her into an eternal service of Brahman. This aspect of the Jiva as a mode of Parabrahman appearing in the scale of evolution is his *prakarata*. The rays of a light are never conceived as separate from it and accordingly the Jivas are non-separate from the substratum. The Jiva when viewed from this angle is conceived as the attribute of God. He is also the part of the whole since he is only one ray, as it were, out of the infinite clusters of rays that form the halo of God.

This conception of the divinity in twain provides eternal individuality to the limitations of Brahman of Sankara. Sankara sees Brahman as one and Ramanuja sees It as one but as a Light based on Upanishadic verdicts, like :

आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

य एषोऽन्तरादित्ये हिरण्मयः पृष्ठः ॥

Intrinsically then the two are not of different realizations. The expressions of both are suited to particular audiences of their times. But, to us both form one structure—Sankara as the ideal realization expressing himself through Ramanuja. As regards Madhva the one word used by Venkata Desika, is that Dvaitism is very near to Visishtadvaita (*matsannikriṣṭam matam*), thus including it also into the fold of oneness of Vedantic teachings.

It is therefore not a question of reconciliation but of understanding.

THE SALVAGE OF CIVILISATION.

By M. R. Ramaswami, B.A., B.L.

Whither mankind? The question is as old as speculative thought. It comes now ringing through the corridors of history to a world that is passing through a fiery ordeal, the outcome of which is a matter of much anxious concern for thinking minds all over the globe. On our answer to the query depends the future of civilisation which is in a state of utter collapse today. On it also rests the solution of the many problems of post-war reconstruction. The modern world is in the throes of re-birth. Its poignant travails are but partly felt in the colossal suffering brought on millions by the dreadful tragedy of war. Old values and established orders are crumbling down everywhere, burying vast empires, hoary cultures and splendid civilisations under the debris. New orders based on new institutions and new values are bound to emerge out of the creative womb of Time. For, in history as in Nature, the destructive process is always a necessary prelude to the constructive one, even as darkness is to light or death to life. It is through the inevitable play of these twin processes that humanity mar-

ches on along the ever-winding spiral path of progress, advancing from one peak of achievement and self-realisation to another.

There is thus no reason for despair at the present tragic plight of mankind. Even in the midst of the prevailing gloom and confusion created by the din of crashing empires we may, with a spirit of detachment, see the inexorable working of the eternal verities in the cataclysmic changes through which the destiny of man is being reshaped on the anvil of contemporary history. We may also proceed in a spirit of robust optimism to envisage the broad outlines of the new edifice of world-culture and civilisation that will have to be raised in the place of the falling ones to meet the requirements of the future. Before attempting this, it is worth while briefly to diagnose the malady afflicting the modern world, to examine the evils that have culminated in the present crisis. The disease is evidently deeprooted; not one limb of the social organism being left unaffected. Religion, science, politics, economics, education, art, marriage and morals—all alike show signs of dis-

integration. No sphere of modern life is free from abuses that call for radical reform, the relentless application of the surgeon's knife.

The origin of the rot that has ruined the modern world must be traced to the time when the old forms of religion lost their hold on men's minds, unable to withstand the onslaught of rationalistic science. This failure generated a tide of materialism which rapidly gained the proportions of a mighty irresistible, torrent that swept away every vestige of spiritual life and plunged the western world in a mad pursuit of wealth and power. The old gods were dethroned and replaced by new ones—the machine and the militarist state, the modern representatives of mammon and moloch. The blind worship of these narrowed man's mental vision and stunted his spiritual nature. Under the influence of the machine cult he reduced himself to an automaton, forgetting the immortal spark within. The economic order built up by capitalist industrialism also forced millions to work under cramping conditions which denied them all opportunities for a higher life. The votaries of militarist nationalism vied with one another in building up armed power to extend their imperial domain to the

ends of the earth, regardless of the liberties of other peoples whom they sought to exploit.

Science in spite of its loud claims to be a new evangel, failed to save the spirit-starved, mechanised and armament-ridden world from sinking under the weight of the iniquities heaped thereon by the monsters it helped to enthrone. By its partial, purely empirical and almost soulless approach to Truth it failed to bring light to groping humanity. What was worse, by serving as the hand-maid of these dark forces and placing in their armoury most powerful weapons of destruction, it multiplied the direness of the havoc of modern warfare and added poignancy to human sufferings. The springs of art, education and culture were also soiled at their very source by ideological myths and fallacies sedulously fostered to perpetuate the hold of the powers that be on their helpless victims. Marriage, ceasing long ago to be a sacrament was viewed only as a union of flesh which may be dissolved at will. The disintegration of family life, followed by a general relaxation of moral and social ties, helped to degrade men and women to a plane below that of the animal. Thus nothing was left undone

to complete the disruption from within and without of the vast structure of western civilisation on which the modern world rested.

It is as a natural, inevitable culmination of these combined processes that we find ourselves today caught within the vortex of a flaming death-dance, a fiery tornado that threatens to consume both the hemispheres with all the cultural and spiritual legacies that have come down to us from the dawn of history. The crisis is pregnant with a challenge that is worthy of the highest potentialities of man. It calls for the fullest manifestation of the infinite spiritual energy latent in every individual. The profoundest mistake committed by the leaders of modern thought in Europe and America lay in their gross misunderstanding of human personality, their failure to reckon with the divine, immortal, spark within, the spirit or soul, which constitutes the real core of man's being. They equated man as a social or economic biped and interpreted history and politics as a play of merely material forces without any spiritual significance. On a careful scrutiny, this cardinal error will be found to have vitiated every sphere of modern life and ultimately

led to the present debacle. No society, state, culture or civilisation can endure without a sound philosophy of life which takes into consideration all the aspects and realities of life.

From this angle of view, Capitalism, Communism, Fascism or any other nostrum of the western materialistic mind cannot provide a satisfactory cure of the evils depicted above. Capitalism in the sense it was hitherto known to the world is well-nigh extinct, beyond revival. Communism with its doctrine of economic determinism and materialistic interpretation of history still exercises a hold on some, especially youthful minds. It no doubt answers an essential need of man, the economic. The demand for economic security for even the meanest of our fellow beings is perfectly legitimate and highly necessary in view of the havoc brought by capitalist industrialism on the working classes and dumb millions. Many of the steps suggested by the communist to ensure this economic security are increasingly found to be sound and eminently practical. But we have to bear in mind that the economic is but one of the many intricate motives of human action. Man does not live by bread alone. Once bread is assured,

the human spirit within begins to blossom and put forth fresh petals which require even greater attention. Motives other than the economic, surely of a higher order, then come up, seeking expression along channels which the communists, with his imperfect reading of human personality, cannot comprehend. The opposing cult of Fascism, in spite of the charm it might cast by its present military triumphs, is equally if not more defective. It cannot satisfy the requirements of the future if only because it relies mainly on inhuman, ruthless brute force to gain its ends. To the architects of future civilisation it has a value only as an effective instrument in the hands of historic nemesis to pull down the rotten order set up by capitalist Imperialism all over the world. It may also serve for a time to keep back the blind upward rush of the revolutionary proletariat whose unrestrained sovereignty might bring about serious reactions on cultural and spiritual values. But in so far as it has not yet revealed a correct or comprehensive philosophy of life based on a complete understanding of human nature, it cannot by itself build an enduring world order or civilisation which will save humanity from its

tragic plight. If it emerges victorious, unchallenged, from the present war, there is the evident danger of the world becoming one vast prison house, seething with bitterness, hatred and violence.

What, then, is the way out for struggling mankind? To the Indian mind the answer is clear. It lies along the path of spirituality. Indian sages have long ago proved and proclaimed that man is preeminently a spiritual being and that his highest good, as well as the good of the world, consists in so ordering life as to lead to the development of his dormant spiritual powers and realisation of universal divinity. They have also uttered the warning in unmistakable terms that the denial of this divinity by the subordination or enslavement of the human personality to matter must lead to untold misery, darkness and death. Their interpretation of history is based on the law of human divinity, the eventual supremacy of spirit over matter. The present state of the world amply testifies to the soundness of their wisdom. According to them the evils born of aggressive, unbalanced materialism can be cured only by a restoration of the balance, the natural relationship between matter and spirit. Man must

be emancipated from the thraldom of matter, embodied in the cult of the machine, in the reign of mammon and moloch. The human spirit must be liberated from all bonds and made to realise its high status. The salvage of civilisation cannot be achieved without a worldwide spiritual awakening.

Here we may guard ourselves against the idea that spiritual values are quite opposed to material values and that therefore they have nothing to do with the social, economic or political welfare of mankind. This is an oft-repeated and popular fallacy which has spelt ruin for both our spiritual and material interests. Spirit does not, in truth, deny, matter but only sustains it with life. It is the divorce of spirit from matter that leads to death. Hence the only cure for all our mundane ailments is a proper infusion of life-giving spiritual force into the diseased limb. The tree of life has to be watered at the roots to yield the fine fruits of culture and civilisation holding the nectar of happiness and immortality. This is preeminently the task of religion. But, alas, in the modern world nothing has fallen so low or into greater disrepute than religion. Its failure to answer the challenge of rationalism was, as already

pointed out, the beginning of the fall. The abuses of an utterly demoralised priesthood and organised church worship have also rightly earned for the cheap sort of religion provided by these institutions the odium of being the opiate of the masses meant to keep them under control.

Sham religion is surely a curse which must be combated. But it should not be confused with the genuine type which, as the awakener and liberator of the human spirit, holds the panacea for all our sufferings. The religion such as Sri Ramakrishna in modern times, lived and taught, and which a brilliant galaxy of Indian saints and sages have from immemorial times embodied in their life and teachings, is such a universal solvent of all the ills which human beings are heir to. Swami Vivekananda has expounded it in a simple yet sublime form best suited to the changed needs of the modern rationalistic world for many generations to come, bereft of all the mystic trappings of ritualism or credal colouring, free from the taints of the old established religions. Mahatma Gandhi, to mention only a towering personality of the contemporary world, is holding aloft the torch of ancient wisdom, treading the lone

path, in a world darkened by devilish violence, seeking to prove once more the matchless superiority of moral and spiritual strength to the most organised form of material might. Mankind must needs listen to the gospel of these

Indian stalwarts if it should escape complete ruin. Civilisation cannot be saved without reinstating the hold of a healthy religion in the human heart. India alone can perform this glorious task.

WHEN THE SEED HAS BEEN SOWN

By W. H. Koch

(Continued from the February issue)

It is not so much any form of philosophy, whether Western or Eastern, that the Western aspirant requires, but the practical side of the different forms of *Sadhana* and the technique with the age-old traditions and psychological experience behind it that India can give him. For what the Westerner and more than anybody else Western youth needs to-day, torn as it is by warring allegiances and creeds and vague hazy hopes founded on pseudo-values, is not so much the abstract system of Vedanta, whether Dvaita or Visishtadvaita or Advaita, as the practical side of the path showing him the way to reach his own experience and gain certitude for himself in place of mere dogmatic beliefs and assertions which can always be shattered if the outer pressure of life surpasses his power of resistance.

Vedanta has a great importance in helping him to gain insight into himself and to draw his mind away from merely mechanical activities and inventions and mere outward mentally constructed forms of sociology; for as long as man does not understand his own essence and quality, there can be no new better order and no improvement whatever in the world. And all the glib high-sounding phrases are nothing

but drugs dulling the minds of the herd and keeping their vague hopes alive to make them more docile instruments. Unfortunately the West has still very much to grasp that the health of the mind and of the emotions and individual spiritual development is at least just as necessary as modern hygiene and the fight against physical diseases.

And this gaining of self-knowledge that the different forms of Vedanta and of the heterodox systems offer the aspirant, certainly forms one of the greatest attractions of the Indian paths. And in this they really form a vast synthesis, showing a way and having a place for all temperaments and giving them the particular teachings with the help of which they can make their own experiments in spiritual experience, all leading or meant to lead to the same end in spite of their divergent and even contradictory forms of spiritual practice.

The way can be the way of the heart and the transmutation of the lower emotions and instincts through the purposeful development of the highest devotion to the Divine or some special form of the Divine. It can be the way of the purified intellect leading the aspirant to the very threshold of super-

conscious realisation. It can be the way of meditation and psychological experiment with or without the idea of the Divine. And it can be the way of selfless, unconditional service renouncing all the fruits of one's works, or even the strictly atheistic way of some forms of Buddhism with their special practices of meditation and infinite compassion. So there is a place for all, from the most primitive idol-worshipper to the perfect devotee of the Lord, from the most active temperament to the absolute recluse. And if all of them truly follow their particular path, they can gain insight into the true nature of life and of man to the extent to which their spiritual yearning has been sincere and one-pointed, and has prepared them to pay the full price for their striving and their Divine quest.

As Sri Ramakrishna so beautifully teaches : 'It is all a question of really hoisting and unfurling our own sails ; for the Divine breeze of grace is ever there to help the earnest seeker ; and it comes to him in the form of steady self-effort and deep yearning for the life of the spirit ; no matter in what form this may be conceived and thought of by the novice '.

So many of the categorical and exclusive "thou shalt nots" accompanied by the usual threats of punishment which the Western mind is accustomed to associate with religion are replaced by direct individual instruction unaccompanied by menaces, which fact brings the working and the presence of the Divine Power infinitely closer to the human heart than any fixed set of commands standardising the spiritual needs of every man once for all ; for each one of us must grow along his own lines of development and the laws of his own being and cannot be pressed into the general mould of just one system or one creed if his growth is not to be stunted or stopped. And for all those who are ready to accept the truth of this necessary synthesis in the spiritual field of life, it

opens new ways and a deeper understanding of the laws of life in themselves and in others.

Those in the West who have had the privilege of coming into intimate touch with the living examples of India's spirituality can never look at the world and its ways with the old eyes, but must begin to move in new paths as explorers of the inner realms of life. It does not matter whether there are set-backs, whether during certain periods the path seems almost to be lost, whether no end of obstructions raise their heads during a certain time. The seed is there, within them, and must germinate and come to life. It must, one day, free them from the petrified ideas and blind impulsive reactions of animal man. And this knowledge is very, very precious in these days of darkness when hatred is hurled against hatred and all the wisdom of the really Great Ones of humanity seems to have been lost or is wantonly and knowingly thrown to the winds. What a contrast between this and the words of the Buddha, "Never is hatred conquered by hatred. Hatred is conquered by love", and, "Be ye lamps unto yourselves". What tremendous strength and purity and insight five hundred years before the coming of Christ !

And this inner unfolding gives to the life of the aspirant an ever-growing beauty independent of events and fills his heart with a great stillness of gratitude and poise.

Without India's message and the example of her great spiritual sons and heroes and the little we ourselves have learnt of India's spiritual technique it would, at least for many of us, be almost unbearable to pass inwardly unscathed through these days of misery, darkness, untruth, and the glorification of the brute, without being crippled and embittered and stunted or without becoming a prey to hatred and blind vindictiveness or without being swallowed up by insidious propaganda.

It is of no importance whether some of us love Sri Ramakrishna more dearly than any other, or others give their whole heart's allegiance to the Buddha and his teaching of infinite compassion, and others again feel irresistibly drawn to the message of Sri Ramana Maharshi or Sri Aurobindo, or to Sri Sankaracharya and the conception of the One Indivisible Self which he elaborated and systematised in his wonderful commentaries, or to any other of the great Indian saints of the Middle Ages.

And here the writer would like to quote from a letter he received a short time ago, because in its own way it expresses the feelings of a good number of Western aspirants, and has therefore a general significance within its own limits :--

"In my case the first contact with Indian thought was brought about through the books on Mahatma Gandhi by M. Romain Rolland. Ten years later I was given a copy of the biography of Sri Ramakrishna which deeply moved my mind. Sri Ramakrishna was much closer to me and soon more familiar than Christ. To me he was the embodiment of the answer to the question that is frequently asked, 'How would it be if Christ walked the earth to-day?' No dogmatic difficulties separated me from him. I felt directly touched and moved and longed to have a deeper insight into the philosophy and religion of Sri Ramakrishna's country. I wished to study the Indian sources myself without any Western interpreter, however grateful I was to M. Romain Rolland for his role of mediator. I found a translation of the Bhagavadgita and learnt whole passages of it by heart. Then I met a friend of mine who had met Swami at , and told me quite casually of this meeting. Surprised at my interest she lent me Swami Brahmananda's *Spiritual Teachings* where I gained quite new knowledge. I laid aside all work in order to absorb this book. Here was a teacher who spoke as simply

to his pupils as I needed it, who began with the preliminary conditions I possessed, and who helped one onwards. I had already acquired a certain amount of mind-control and capacity for meditation through the books of A. Curtis. Here I learnt these in a new way that appealed more strongly to me in combination with the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Especially new to me was the conception and practice of *Japam*. This practice at once appealed to me as a means that specially suited me. After that I was brought together with Swami Here was the living embodiment of Eastern knowledge that I was seeking, and at my disposal, ready to answer questions and to give me instructions suited to my personal tendencies and circumstances. Truly, Sri Ramakrishna could not do more for me than this. For a long time the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by M. was my favourite book, whereas I turned only hesitatingly to the works of Swami Vivekananda.

Of the newly gained philosophical good the most important point for me has become the conception of the Self and the teaching of right and wrong identification based on it, that I am neither the body, nor the mind, nor the senses, nor the ego, etc., etc. Also the idea that we are our own ancestors greatly appealed to me. The new goal of my life has become the striving for realisation, and I am happy to know that many different paths lead there. I have the impression of having been given everything I need. I am overwhelmed at the goodness of Sri Ramakrishna. I have the Guru, the books and the way. If my life now becomes a failure, it is only my own fault, and through the intensity of my own striving I myself determine the extent of my progress.

I cannot imagine how I could bear these times of unspeakable misery without Vedanta. But I know that nothing really evil can happen to me whatever turn events may take, because no one can ever

rob me again of the communion with the Self. This has become the anchor of my present life, and I owe this to Vedanta and to Sri Ramakrishna."

The reaction of a Western mind described in these lines is very typical and the same in the case of many with only very slight differences of personality and mental make-up. So in spite of the personal element it contains, it yet embodies a general experience with which most of the Western aspirants would gladly agree.

To the Western heart and mind which approaches the Indian teachings humbly and intelligently, without superiority-complex indulging in mere idle curiosity for something strange and exotic, throwing aside all hide-bound dogmatism stalking some imaginary prey. Indo-Aryan teachings are like the most beautiful symphony ever composed by man or the Divine in man, unfolding itself ceaselessly supported by the deep organ-points of oneness, of same-sightedness, of sympathy with all life, and of freedom.

If Beethoven's symphonies and certain of Bach's fugues and cantatas remind one of the majestic forms of Roman and Gothic Cathedrals, and Cesar Franck's inspired religious music raises shining pillars of strength and depth and beauty to the dome of heaven in our day, this mighty symphony of India's heart may be likened to the vast azure vault of the sky with the sun's rays playing in little ripples and awe-inspiring flashes shedding light and power on man and beast and plant, on the snowy heights of the glaciers and peaks, and on the still surface of gloomy tarns and deep brooding mountain-lakes, and

making them, too, come to life and radiance.

May this symphony be heard more and more by the Western heart calling it to peace and light, bleeding, as it is, from many wounds through the unceasing restlessness and struggle and fight and frustration in its own blind and misdirected groping for what it considers to be the happiness of life and life's fulfilment. For India's eternal spiritual symphony, the *Sanatana Dharma*, is the symphony of awakened man, of man that has attained to his manhood,—which at the same time is the attainment of the Self of all life.

May those who have had the privilege of coming into touch with it, never forget the debt of gratitude they owe to India for what she has given them and is giving them still. May they one day be worthy of this precious gift and learn to apply it to their own life. May they become lamps unto themselves and others, and bow down before the sacredness of all life as the friends of all life. For they at least can no longer plead ignorance, having been shown the way and the debt of gratitude will have to be paid.

"May there be peace in heaven. May there be peace in the sky. May there be peace on earth. May there be peace in the water. May there be peace in the plants. May there be peace in the trees. May there be peace in the gods. May there be peace in Brahman. May there be peace in all. May that peace, real peace be ours!"

"May the wicked become virtuous. May the virtuous attain tranquillity. May the tranquil be free from bonds. May the freed make others free!"

(Concluded)

KALIDASA ON TEACHING

By S. Thiruvenkatachari, M.A., L.T.

That Kalidasa's works have survived centuries is due mainly to the eternal nature of their theme, *Man*. To this fact also must be traced the living interest which even foreigners evince in his works to this day. Kalidasa was a versatile genius and nothing that he touched did he leave unadorned. His works have a sublimity and picturesqueness of artistic expression all of their own. They are imbued with an ever-growing adaptability and incisive liveliness that every age is apt to regard as peculiarly theirs.

Kalidasa's views have an extensive sweep; their unerring focus range from education to Vedanta. In fact, his ideas on education especially on teaching as we find expressed through the important characters in his *Malavikagnimitram* (Act I & II) are sure to commend themselves to modern educationists.

Two Kinds of Teachers.

Kalidasa refers to two kinds of teachers, the learned and the impressive. Those of the first category possess the merit of sound and thorough-paced scholarship. But they have this defect: They fail

as teachers and the instruction they impart to their pupils is not impressive and hence not fruitful. Those belonging to the second variety, the impressive, are not so scholarly or learned as the other. They are not so thorough in their subjects. But they are successful and impressive teachers. They drive their ideas home into the pupils. Kalidasa puts the question and answers it himself: 'Which of these should we place at the top?' In answer to this, he speaks of a third variety consisting of those who have both scholarship and the capacity to teach. Says his Parivrajika: 'One man is at his best in the exhibition of his art; another has as his special merit the power of transmitting his skill; he who possesses both these excellences are the foremost among teachers'. (Act I. 16) If the first variety might be called good and the second better, Kalidasa would call the third *the best*.

Teachers and Controversies.

Nowadays, in our country especially, a teacher is not expected to know more than what is contained in the text books he handles—the differ-

ence between the teacher and the pupil being that the teacher learns the lesson one day earlier than the pupil. He is neither permitted nor inclined to interest himself in live issues. If he has leisure, it is to be utilized for the correction of extra exercises in composition, for pushing the backward boys forward and for various miscellaneous duties that his *masters* might assign him. The masters of teachers say that a teacher has no business to 'waste his time' in current problems. But real educationists however hold the view that teachers may be permitted to take part in extra activities of an intellectual type. Kalidasa's ideal teacher is one who never stops with mere mechanical teaching. He must be ever alert; he must take a living interest in all problems concerning education. He must be prepared to take up an issue and 'fight' for it. He must have the nerve to adopt his own scheme in the class. He must have the courage to reject the conventional methods if they are found faulty. He must not fight shy of controversial issues and acquiesce in any method of teaching that is foisted on him, but must have the boldness to point out the holes in the method he despises. Kalidasa stood for such freedom

of views and methods in teaching and rated low those who kept clear of conflicts for fear of jeopardising their material interests. He puts in the mouth of Ganadasa the words: 'The man who shrinks from controversy because he has gained a footing and patiently endures disparagement from a rival, whose learning is merely a means of livelihood, is called a trader that trafficks in knowledge'. (Act I. 17).

Teacher and Teaching

We all know that teaching is a bi-polar process. At one end is the teacher and at the other the pupil. While it is true that much depends on the 'stuff' given to the teacher, it is equally true that much depends on the teacher also. So to insist on quality in both the parties is to assure perfection. Kalidasa gave adequate emphasis to this fact. According to him the instruction of a teacher should prove its worth by standing the fire of the criticism of the wise, and by emerging like shining gold out of the furnace. (Act II. 9.) Such a flawless instruction when imparted to a worthy pupil attains a special excellence. 'The skill of a teacher when imparted to a deserving pupil attains greater excellence as the water of a cloud on dropping

into an oyster shell turns into a pearl.' (Act I. 6.) Hence Kalidasa would shut the doors of the teaching profession on those who have not been trained under great *gurus*: The teaching profession should never be allowed to become the limbo for the unemployed.

Teacher and the Choice of Pupils

Kalidasa would not democratize education. He would deny education to those pupils who have no aptitude and would condemn a teacher who selects all and sundry for instruction. Of course modern educational theory does not favour this idea. According to modern notions, a teacher who ignores the 'backward' children fails in his primary duty. But Kalidasa would prescribe certain

qualifications for the would-be pupil. The pupil must be clever enough to grasp anything that is imparted to him without effort. Ganadasa, Malavika's tutor of dancing, pays a glowing tribute to her talent when he says, 'Whatever movement expressive of sentiment is taught by me to her by way of acting, the girl, as it were, teaches me the same in return by her superior performance of it'. (Act I. 5) The pupil must not tax the teacher too much; he must be capable of hard work and must rise to the occasion even in case of an extempore test of his skill. In short, the pupil must have enough which the teacher might draw out. The acceptance of a bad pupil shows want of discernment on the part of the teacher.¹

MYSTICISM AND ITS PRAGMATIC ASPECT

By G. A. Chandavarkar, M.A.

In the history of the development of human thought in general and religious thought in particular there is no chapter more abstruse but yet more profoundly instructive than the one that deals with mysticism. While some unrelenting utilitarians tenaciously cling to the notion that mysticism is nothing more than a dreamy contemplation of ideas that

have no rational foundation in human experience there are others of the mystic persuasion who firmly believe that it enables many to successfully solve the mysteries of human existence by an internal illumination or a special revelation. Wherever the resultant of these two forces may lie, there can be no denying the fact that the prophets and

¹ Kalidasa brings out this idea in a conversation between the King and Queen in Act II of *Malavikagnimitram*:

Queen: But when a soft-headed pupil disgraces the instruction of his teacher, is that the fault of a teacher?

King: Queen, it is thus explained. The acceptance of an unpromising pupil shows want of discernment in the teacher.

founders of all the great religions of the world, the saints of all ages and climes, and even modern thinkers like Dean Inge, William James and Evelyn Underhill have all been profoundly influenced by this unique phase of human experience. With a view to study its pragmatic aspect, let us briefly review its history and its aim and achievements.

ITS HISTORY

The roots of mysticism go far deep into the soil of even prehistoric times. In one of the oldest Hindu Puranas, viz. the *Bhagavata*, prominent mention of a long line of mystics beginning with Prahlada, Narada, and ending with Arjuna has been made. Among the Greeks the Neo-Platonists, among the Christian saints like Paul and Francis of Assisi, among the Mohamadans the Sufis, among the medieval Indian saints Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas and in modern times saints like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and thinkers like Tolstoy and Romain Rolland, may be considered mystics in some form or other. If their life and teachings had no pragmatic basis, they would not have survived to this day, however modified their forms may be. Lord Buddha, Confucius, Christ and Rabindranath Tagore are mystics of some kind or other. Their preachings and their works bear unmistakable signs of the influence of mysticism. Perhaps it is that aspect that has the greatest hold on their followers.

ITS AIMS

When we study the fundamentals of mysticism we see, above every thing else, love of God pure and simple to be the alpha and omega of its creed. In the terminology of Vedanta it is the sole experience of *Parabrahma* in all its completeness. God is all Love and beneficent. Such being his firm belief a mystic necessarily takes an optimistic view of life. To him life can have no dark side. He will approach all beings in a spirit of love. When he thinks God's mercy alone is real and

final, he cannot entertain feelings of jealousy, envy or ill-will towards any one. To him deeds of violence, aggression or bloodshed become naturally abhorrent. Psuedo-notions of narrow nationalism or racial superiority or colour prejudices find no place at all in his system of thought. A mystic can therefore be classified as the member of the Parliament of the world. He is an ardent follower of the 'Fellowship of all Faiths'. Secondly, he believes that each and every human soul can communicate with and merge itself into the Divine Soul, through inward spiritual perception. To him the *summum bonum* of life is to be 'in tune with the infinite'. All our struggles and scramblings are considered by him endeavours of the finite to be one with the infinity. A mystic therefore can, in the words of Watkins, be defined as 'One who holds that the soul even in this life can unite with the Divine and who believes in the possibility and actuality of certain experiences in which the mind is brought in contact with what it believes to be God and enjoys the fruition of what it takes as the Ultimate Reality'. How this is possible can easily be understood when we dispassionately examine the different stages through which a mystic passes.

SPECTRUM ANALYSIS OF THE EMOTIONS

Just as white light can be analysed into seven different colours, mysticism can be analysed into seven stages according to the Hindu standpoint. The seven stages are (1) *Dasya*—disinterested service to fellowmen. (2) *Vatsalya*—child-like love to all. (3) *Sakhya*—friendship to all. (4) *Madhurya*—sweetness in word and deed. (5) *Unmada*—God-intoxication. (6) *Shanti*—peace and (7) *Nishkama Bhakti*—disinterested piety. Hanuman, Arjuna, Vibheesana, Radha and a score of others had passed through one or all of these stages. Each stage of discipline through which

they individually passed is a stage of mysticism. Henri Drummond gives a similar analysis of the spectrum of Love in their nine ingredients. Each mystic holds that to love abundantly is to live abundantly and to love for ever is to live for ever. Love is not mere enthusiastic emotion. In reality, it is that which gives muscle to the soul. Strength of character is infused in it and then spiritual growth is ensured thereby. Even in the humblest of human lives there are many opportunities of showing and learning Love. 'We love Him because He first loved us', says John. Similarly the *Para Bhakti* results in *Brahmananda*—Eternal Bliss. This manifests itself into three stages according to the Hindu ideal, *Shuddhi*, *Prakasha* and *Yoga*. It is worthwhile remembering that the Neo-Platonic terms are similar, Purification, Illumination and final Union. Hence a mystic aims at purity of thought in divine contemplation, next feels himself illumined by God-consciousness and lastly he merges into infinity. When he reaches that stage he can draw solace even from despair, worries and miseries. With stoic indifference he can look upon the miseries of life. Such consolation the mystics had.

In recent times the study of comparative religions has accelerated the process of the evolution of the idea that all religions are fundamentally the same. No religion can now lay any claim to its exclusive greatness. So also researches in the field of mysticism which has roots in all religions and similar experiences have paved the way for intellectual co-operation among the different nations of the world. A mystic may

appear to be a dreamer or a visionary but he has his own place in the world of practical thought. In the 'cultured West' mysticism was hopelessly ignored and the resulting fellow-feeling was lost sight of. A civilisation that fails to have a real spiritual background crumbles down. Progress based on narrow nationalism spells its own ruin. Noble ideas propagated, by Emerson, Tolstoy and Tagore have been entirely lost sight of. Voices of Bertrand Russell, Dean Inge and other thinkers have been cries in the wilderness. With what frightful results? The present ruthless war gives the answer. Really when the New Order is ushered in the civilisation deserves to be broad-based on spirituality, equality and fraternity and on that great ideal of love preached and practised by the great thinkers of the world, call them saints or mystics. The rule of the Cholas, Pandyas or the Vijayanagar kings was broad-based on spiritual truths contained in the preachings of Shaivite or Vaishnavite saints. Shivaji was an ardent admirer of Ramdas and Tukaram, Asoka an enthusiastic follower of the Buddha and Akbar a devotee of monotheism which was an attempt at the synthesis of all religions. We do hope that all these lessons will not be lost on the builders of the future civilisation of the world. Directly or indirectly the philosophy of mysticism real and genuine is sure to influence those master minds of the future. The saints of the world have not lived in vain. Their visions were unerring. Their dreams were not unreal. The present chaos is the result of the utter disregard of their wisdom.

THE MESSAGE OF THE TATHAGATA

By Swami Adidevananda

Modern civilization has by the aid of its scientific skill succeeded in making the physical oneness of the world a *fait accompli*. But it has ignominiously failed in vindicating the essential spiritual unity inhering in the world and establishing concord between nations. To this failure to forge the spiritual unity must largely be ascribed the distressing chaotic condition of the world today. Man has won for himself all the trumperies of the world. But 'what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul'. No wonder then that this soulless yet glamourous civilization is tumbling to pieces before our very eyes. If humanity is to be saved from a total wreck spiritual values must be enthroned ere long. The dignity of man and his essential oneness with the universe should be emphasized. This naturally will bring the realization of the oneness and sanctity of all life and install humanity and brotherhood as the guiding deities. In this zero hour of history when the War Lords in their utter disregard for life are making short work of men and civilization, the

message of the Tathagata for whom the sanctity and oneness of life was the paramount *dharma* must afford infinite solace and peace to all hearts in agony.

The message of peace was given by the Buddha five hundred years before the birth of Christ. Neither did he make a 'new deal' in philosophy, nor point out a new path to lead humanity out of ignorance. What he did was to throw open the portals of Upanishadic wisdom, which was confined to a limited few. With striking simplicity the Buddha taught that if men wanted to be really happy they must give up the life of the senses, cleanse the heart of its impurities and enthrone love, compassion and purity of life.

The keystone of the Buddha's philosophy was the importance attached to Karma or the Law, and the pivotal position ethics occupied in the system. The Law was nothing but the law of causality extended to the moral world. As one sows so he shall reap. Everyone is free to act and to enjoy the fruits of his actions. The Law thus upholds the ethics of Buddhism, making man the architect of his own destiny.

The Buddha's first sermon at Isipatana begins with the proclamation of the Middle Path, which inculcates the avoidance of the two extremes, namely, attachment to the pleasure of the senses on the one hand, and self-mortification on the other; he who avoids the two extremes gains the knowledge of the Middle Path. For a better comprehension of the nature of suffering, its cause and cessation, the Exalted One taught the Four Aryan Truths and the Eight-fold Aryan Path.

What is the origin of suffering? The second Aryan Truth says that craving for life and its various pleasures is the true origin of suffering. This craving is called Tanha. It gives rise to a wrong belief in a false personality who eats the sweet and bitter fruits of life and never rises above the ephemeral enjoyments.

Then how to secure absolute happiness or absolute cessation of this suffering? 'Destroy Tanha', says the Buddha, 'which is the true basis of suffering, if you want release from mundane life.' When this craving is utterly annihilated, there will be an end to all our sufferings and sorrows. This is the third Aryan Truth about the cessation of suffering.

What then is the way that leads to the cessation of suffering? The fourth Aryan Truth, points out the way by the inculcation of the Eight-fold Path.

The criticism that Nibbana is nothingness is a shallow one. Many distinguished Buddhist scholars have answered this criticism of Nibbana and maintained that it is an utterly wrong interpretation of the Buddha's conception of final emancipation. If the state of Nibbana is mere nothingness, why should one give up the craving for life to become a non-entity? It is far better to preserve one's own personality, than be absorbed into a complete vacuity. If the Buddha has urged that mankind should give up the craving for life he must have had in mind a supreme and positive state of release which is beyond mind and matter. Nibbana is a spiritual state that extinguishes forever the thirst for life and its seeds of lust, anger and infatuation which bring sorrow and suffering in their train.

The Buddha is represented as an atheist, as he did not believe in a personal God. In the same sense the Vedantic philosophers for whom the highest Reality was *Nirguna* and *Nirakara*, can also be

termed atheists. The Buddha was silent on the nature of God, as he knew that the inexpressible Supreme Spirit was beyond the reach of speech and thought. His supreme duty was to point out the Path of Dhamma, as he believed that if people were to follow the Path of Righteousness in all its purity, there would be an end to all disputations about God.

The Buddha was the greatest combination of incessant and selfless work, pure love and highest knowledge,—he was a Karma Yogi and Jnana Yogi in one. His heart was as brave as it was compassionate. He was a great reformer and the founder of a huge and organised monastic order, probably the first

of its kind in the world. To sum up in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'He is the ideal Karma Yogi acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born'. The Buddha's great renunciation has its origin in the dawn of a profound love for all life. His true greatness lay neither in his wonderful renunciation, nor in his intellectual attainments, but in his deepest love and compassion for all,—for all forms of life.

May the suffering humanity find lasting peace and abiding solace in the teachings of the Tathagata who had no other thought in his mind save the happiness of mankind.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Sarirakanyayasaṅgraha: By Prakasatmayati. (Sanskrit) Edited by Dr. T. R. Chintamani, M. A., Ph. D., and published by the University of Madras.

Among the non-dualistic thinkers who followed Sri Sankara, Prakasatmayati is one of the earliest and eminently distinguished. From archaeological evidences it is understood that he lived in Travancore in the last quarter of the tenth century. He was a great ascetic living a life devoted to the study and practice of vedantic wisdom. Prakasatmayati is deservedly famous in the circle of Advaitins for his much valued commentary on the *Panchapadikatika* of Padmapada-

Charya, an immediate disciple of Sri Sankara. The work before us is an equally interesting contribution to the non-dualistic school of thought and discipline.

The title reveals the contents of the present book: it is a methodological treatise briefly setting forth the principles involved in the coherent system of thought adduced by Badarayana from the upanishadic texts in his well-known aphorisms. The method of arriving at unimpeachable canons of interpretation in the light of authority and reason is tried in the two *mimamsas*; but the two schools of *mimamsa* being divergent in their purpose, according to Advaita, few of the rules derived in the prior *mimamsa* only

are not applicable in Vedanta. Vedanta has to find its own rules. The present work makes a successful attempt to give such generalisations in a very pithy and lucid manner. Besides expounding the principles that may be culled out of the 'topics' comprised by a fixed number of aphorisms, the author throws occasionally some hint on interpretation also. Among the appendages of the work are an index of the sutras, an index of the citations, and variant readings brought to the editor's notice after the preparation of the body of the book. No doubt the work is a very welcome addition to the Advaitic literature saved from oblivion by modern scholarship.

Journal of the Benares Hindu University—Silver Jubilee Number 1942.

The Benares Hindu University can deservedly be styled the educational capital of national India. Its Silver Jubilee which was

recently celebrated by its promoters, admirers and alumni is truly a cultural landmark in the history of India. Hence it is but fitting that the authorities have brought out a special Number to commemorate the occasion.

The Number contains about a score of scholarly papers from men of learning both of the University and outside. The subjects treated are of various interests and range from Sericulture to Psychology of Beauty. It offers a feast of wholesome and attractive food for thought to lay readers as well as to those who are interested in technical subjects. This is a fact which will strike anyone who glances through its pages. Sri B. L. Atreya, Dr. C. Narayana Menon and Dr. A. S. Altekar have made significant contributions to this special issue.

We have great pleasure to recommend the volume to all Libraries and Reading Rooms.

NEWS AND REPORTS

The 107th Birthday Anniversary Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras

The Tithi of Sri Ramakrishna fell on the 17th of February 1942, which was duly observed with special Puja, Vedic chants, Homam, Bhajana and the distribution of prasadam. The public celebration came off on the ensuing Sunday, 22nd February. After the Harikatha Kalakshepam in the afternoon, a meeting was convened with Justice Chandrasekhara Iyer in the chair. Speeches were delivered on the life and teachings of the Master in Tamil, Telugu and English. Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Reader in Philosophy, University of Madras, delivered a speech in English on 'Sri Ramakrishna and the times we live in', the text of which appears elsewhere. The meeting came to a close with a vote of thanks by Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Kerala Cyclone Relief Report 1941

The Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, did signal service to thousands of unfortunate inhabitants of British Malabar, Cochin and Travancore who were put to acute suffering by

the terrific tornado that swept over the above area on the 24th May, 1941. The Mission workers were the first to start relief operations in the affected area and their method of work was most effective as attested to by local papers. They distributed rice for the starving, building materials for the construction and repair of demolished houses and medicines and special diet for the ailing. Rs. 4,979-10-6 was spent on the distribution of rice in British Malabar, Rs. 1,387-2-3 in Cochin and Rs. 110-11-5 in Kaladi, Travancore. The total number of houses erected and repaired was 3,570 and the amount spent thereon was Rs. 11,127-4-11. Clothing worth Rs. 1,566-4-4 and 650 pieces of old cloth were also distributed. Work was done in 13 centres which comprised a total of 135 villages.

The total receipts amounted to Rs. 23,915-12-0 and the total expenses under different heads came to Rs. 20,348-5-4.

The Mission records its deep sense of indebtedness to the numerous generous gentlemen and organisations whose kind help made this effective service to distressed humanity possible.

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